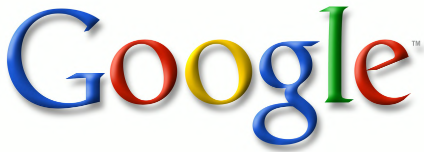


This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


3 3433 06182307 0


Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE

EVIDENCES

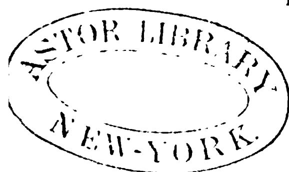
AGAINST

CHRISTIANITY.

By JOHN S. HITTELL.

SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.


ASTOR LIBRARY NEW-YORK.

VOL. II.

New York:

CALVIN BLANCHARD,

76 Nassau Street.

1857.

Digitized by Google

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, in the Clerk's
Office of the District Court of the United States,
for the Northern District of California.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, in the Clerk's
Office of the District Court of the United States,
for the Southern District of New York.

L. Hauser, Stereotyper, 12 North William Street

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

"To trace an error to its source is to refute it."—DUGALD STEWARD.

§. 84. In reply to the proof that the doctrines of the Bible were not original with the authors of that book, the Christians assert that these doctrines had been communicated to men by Jehovah in a previous revelation: and having been handed down by tradition, were reännounced by divine authority, to the Hebrews. And they say that the Bible refers to these earlier revelations in mentioning the intercourse of the Deity with Noah, Abraham, and other patriarchs. But the *Pentateuch* gives a record of the substance, and in most cases of the very words of that alleged intercourse, and most plainly implies that nothing passed more important than those matters recorded in express terms. Will any reasonable man pretend that Jehovah revealed himself as a Trinity to Noah, or Abraham, when he spoke of himself as one? Or that he taught them, of an incarnate divinity who should expiate the sin of Adam, when there is no hint of such an incarnation in the Mosaic books, nor the slightest indication of an idea in the mind of the writer of a future life or of the possibility that the sin of Adam would or could be expiated in any way? In regard to the trinity, incarnation and atonement—the three great ideas of the New Testament "dispensation,"—we have abundant warrant, from history and the Bible, for asserting that they were common among heathen nations before they were taught by the followers of Jesus. The assertion of the Christians that these doctrines must have been

Digitized by Google

revealed by Jehovah before being taught among the Hindoos and Egyptians, made in the most positive manner, without a particle of evid ence, is a fair specimenof the manner in which they defend their creed. They imagine that their superstition is a God-given revelation, and whenever it gets into trouble, they take for granted that the best theory for explaining away the difficulty, must be true. When they assert a previous revelation, they should produce affirmative evidence, and really prove the assertion; but that they cannot do. There is no peculiarity, in any of their doctrines, which marks them as evidently of superhuman, or divine origin. Indeed, we do not know what a divine idea would be; the thought which we can grasp, by that grasping becomes human. It is brought down to our level; we have no right to assert that it might not have originated in a human mind. We have no right to assert that it did not originate in a human mind, without producing some positive evidence. Man has no rule by which he can "distinguish * between an idea revealed to him, and in idea conceived by him." Only one kind of testimony of the divine origin of doctrines has ever been offered to mankind, so far as I know: and that was the report of miracles. There is no mention in the sacred books of the Hindoos, Egyptians, Jews, or Galileans, that their prophets endeavored to show the necessity of a divine origin for their teachings, because they were too great and sublime to have been first conceived in a human mind. I may then assume that there is nothing in the doctrines themselves evidently divine: and next I shall endeavor to show that these doctrines did not spring, in the perfection of their present development, from the brain of Jehovah, but grew by slow, gradual, and natural processes, from the low instincts which lead savages to worship stocks and stones. If there was such a growth, it would be absurd to believe that any revelation was concerned in it. Some of the Christian philosophers indeed, in the face of the notorious facts of the advance of their would-be prophets to higher ideas, with the progress of civilization, have contended that Jehovah held back his divine truths till men were ready to receive them; but this

* GREG. Creed of Christendom.

Digitized by Google

alleged method of divine procedure is so exceedingly like the mere natural progress of human thought, that no valid distinction can be made between them. Besides, if there were a possibility of such a natural growth, there would be no probability in the claim of a miraculous creation: "what * the human intellect could ascertain, it would be superfluous for God to reveal." If Jehovah were to keep back his truths, until he saw that men were on the point of discovering them without his assistance, and then reveal them only because he could conceal them no longer, he would, as it appears to me, deserve no very great thanks from humanity—at least in so far as that conduct might be concerned.

§ 85. The savage in his sense of dependence, in the consciousness of his weakness as compared with the great forces of nature, reasons from his own personality to conceive of some great personal manager or managers of the affairs of nature. It is possible that some tribes were blind to the distinctions between animate and inanimate beings, and supposed all the objects of sense to have a life and personality more or less similar to their own. The conception of a superior being was soon followed by an endeavor to propitiate his favor, and in accordance with human analogies, it was supposed that the divinities must be pleased with such shows of subjection and subserviency as were usually resorted to, to gain the favor of men. Public worship among wondering and superstitious savages was suited to take their senses captive; and they soon universally adopted the practice of endeavoring to propitiate the mysterious powers. A few of the most stupid tribes of men in high northern latitudes seem to have no conception of supernatural beings, and have no ideas of worship. But these are rare cases, and the want of the idea of a divinity is probably owing more to the sparseness of the population, and the consequent limited interchange of thought, than to any other cause. The lowest grade of savage in Africa and in the South Sea Islands has his god—an idol or stone—which he worships. As he progresses in art, he improves the form of his idol, and at last comes to consider his idol as the mere representative of the divine—not the divinity

* GREG.

Digitized by Google

himself. In some stages of his mental growth, the idea occurs to him that the powers of nature and the heavenly bodies are divine, and he worships them. The savage considers his idol as his own family-god; the god and man are exclusive in their relations to each other. Exclusive favor and protection are no more than a fair consideration for exclusive worship. Thus, when there was a dispute between Jacob and Laban, they called upon "the God of Abraham and the God of Nachor," the gods of their [respective] fathers, to judge between them (*Gen. XXXI.* 53). When the population became dense, and feelings of nationality arose, the system of family-gods disappeared and that of national gods was introduced. Worship was reduced to an art, theology to a science. "The favor of the gods was believed to be obtained by means similar to those which are most efficacious with powerful mortals—homage and tribute, or in the language of religion, worship and sacrifice. * * * The image of earthly kings applied to the heavenly powers, suggested the persuason that the efficacy of a sacrifice depended on its value, and that the feeling which prompted the offering was not merely to be expressed, but to be measured by it. This persuasion was cherished by two popular prejudices: by the notion that the gods were capable of envy and jealousy, which men might allay by costly profusion in their gifts, and by the view taken of the sacrifice as a banquet for the gods, the more agreeable in proportion as it was rich and splendid."

The belief in the existence of evil divinities was probably as old as the faith in any kind of divine existence; but, after man arrived at the conception of one Creator, they found that, if he were a good divinity, they must still have an evil spirit to account for the existence of evil. As man feels in his own mind the constant struggle of high and low impulses—as good and evil are naturally antagonistic—it was supposed that there were two great spirits who are in constant conflict. The good spirit created the world good; the evil one corrupted it; and man suffers the consequences. The Persians imagined the existence of a mediator between them—a divine man—and the three made the Persian Trinity. The Brahmins conceived of the three-fold divinity as the same person in the various characters of

Digitized by Google

Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. The Boodhists made their Trinity with the Deity, his law or "word," and the union of both. A Trinity, popular in Egypt, was composed of a masculine and feminine (the latter might be understood as the material universe) divinity, and their son, who conquered the evil spirit in battle, and thus was the savior of mankind. The conception of a purely spiritual god, who never manifested himself directly to human eyes, was found to be too exalted for the mass of the people; they wanted a deity who had placed himself on their own level; who had sympathies with them, with whom they could sympathize.

The divinities were conceived as possessing bodies and minds very similar to those of men; but with greater grasp of reason, stronger passions, and greater means of knowledge. Since the earth appeared to comprise the whole creation, except the diminutive celestial bodies, which evidently moved round it, and were made only to give light and measure time for it; since man was obviously the highest grade of terrestrial existence; and since the gods were conceived only as invisible and superhuman men, dwelling in the clouds; so it was also presumed that they occupied all their time with human affairs, and frequently came down to earth and took part in the transactions of men. The great events of nature were supposed to be the doings of the gods; or, if the divine interpositions were not recognized as of daily or frequent occurrence, it was at least supposed that they had been in earlier times. The Jew in the time of Jesus "looked* for wonders and unusual combinations in the past; he expected to hear of Jehovah, Satan, and the angels, moving and operating together upon earth; he pictured to himself the foretime as a theatre in which the Heavenly powers interfered directly, obviously, and frequently, for the protection of their favorites and the punishment of their foes. The rational conception, then only dawning in his mind, of a systematic course of nature, was absorbed by this fervent and lively faith. And if he could have been supplied with as perfect and philosophical a history of his own real past time, as we are now enabled to furnish with regard to the last century of England or France, faithfully recording all

* Altered from Grote's Greece.

Digitized by Google

the successive events, and accounting for them by known positive laws, but introducing no special interventions of Jehovah—such a history would have appeared to him not merely unholy and unimpressive, but destitute of all plausibility or title to credence." As it was supposed, that the celestial personages had frequently come down to earth and taken part in human affairs, fought in mortal battles, and fallen in love with mortal women, so it was natural that the poets and romancers should produce narratives of these divine adventures. These narratives appearing probable in themselves, and being calculated to have an edifying influence on the religious conceptions of the people, were received as true, and, of course, no subject could be more attractive than the biography of the divinities. "These myths* or current stories, the spontaneous and earliest growth of the Jewish mind, constituted, at the same time, the entire intellectual stock of the age to which they belonged. They are the common root of all those different ramifications into which the mental activity of the Jews subsequently diverged, containing as it were the preface and germ of their history, poetry, and theology. * * * * They furnished aliment and solution to the vague doubts and aspirations of the age; they explained the origin of those customs and standing peculiarities with which men were familiar; they impressed moral lessons, awakened patriotic sympathies, and exhibited in detail the shadowy but anxious presentiments of the vulgar, as to the agency of the gods; moreover they satisfied that craving for adventure and appetite for the marvellous, which has in modern times become the province of fiction proper. It is difficult, we may say, it is impossible, for a man of mature age to carry back his mind to his conceptions, such as they stood when he was a child, growing naturally out of his imagination and feelings, working upon a scanty stock of materials, and borrowing from authorities whom he blindly followed but imperfectly apprehended. A similar difficulty occurs when we attempt to place ourselves in the historical and *quasi* philosophical point of view which the ancient myths present to us. We can follow perfectly the imagination and feeling which dictated these tales, and we can admire and sympathize with

* Altered from Grote.

Digitized by Google

them as animated, sublime, and affecting poetry; but we are too much accustomed to matter of fact and philosophy of a positive kind, to be able to conceive a time when these beautiful fancies were construed literally, and accepted as serious reality."

With progress in the arts came intercourse between nations. Travellers soon discovered that the assumption of the exclusive possession of devout and moral men by their respective creeds, were narrow and most injurious prejudices. They saw that the various national divinities were described in similar words, and worshipped with similar ceremonies. They found that justice and benevolence were not confined to any one country, or limited within the bounds of any one form of faith. They discovered the absurdity of believing in a family-god such as was the god of Abraham, or a national god, such as the Jewish divinity in the time of the Judges: they rose to the conception of one sole creator and governor of the universe.

As a necessary consequence of the belief in the immediate divine administration of all earthly affairs, the people supposed that every piece of good or evil fortune was the reward or punishment of a good or evil deed. Where the connection between the good deed and the good fortune—between the evil deed and the evil fortune—was not seen, it was presumed that there was some counterbalancing deed, perhaps of a prior date—perhaps even of a remote ancestor. This was the universal opinion of early antiquity—in Greece and Rome as well as in Judea. With the progress of thought, men saw that this principle was unreasonable. But good and evil must be rewarded and punished: to assert the contrary, would be to blaspheme the justice of the gods. A future life was conceived of, as an explanation of the difficulty: and the new state of existence was looked upon as an important step forward—elevating greatly the dignity and importance of humanity The new birth of a foul worm in the form of a beautiful winged insect, was interpreted as a hint to man of the new existence, and the name of the butterfly (*Psyche*) was used by the Greeks to designate the soul. With the rise of this dogma, the belief in the frequent divine visits to earth began to wane. Jehovah, in a human form, walked, talked,

Digitized by Google

ate, and wrestled frequently with the patriarchs: in the time of Moses, he manifested himself only on rare occasions and in an entirely different method: and by the time of Isaiah he had changed again. Pausanias, a heathen, who wrote in the first half of the second century, A. D., said: "The men of those ancient days, on account of their righteousness and piety, were on terms of hospitality with the gods and their companions at the board, and when they acted uprightly they openly received honor from the gods, just as they were also visited with anger, if they committed any iniquity. And then also they who are still honored in this manner, became gods instead of men. Thus also, we can believe that a Lycaon was transformed into a beast, and Niobe, the daughter of Tantalus, into a stone. But in my time, when vice has reached its loftiest summit, and has spread itself abroad over the whole country and in all cities, no one has passed from man to god, except only in name and out of flattery to power, and the anger of the gods arises at evil more tardily, and is not executed on men till after they have left this world And much which used in former times to take place, and which happens even now, those persons which have mixed falsehood with truth, have rendered incredible to the multitude." When men began to deny the divine interposition in human affairs in their own time, they soon began to doubt whether all those ancient records of the adventures of the gods on earth were not mere fables. "The atheistic philosophers" says Dionysius Halicarnassus, "if those persons deserve the name of philosophers, who scoff at all the appearances of the gods, which have taken place among the Greeks and the barbarians, would deduce all these histories from the trickery of man, and turn them into ridicule, as if none of the gods ever cared for any man; but he who does not deny the gods a providential care over men, but believes that the gods are benevolent to the good, and angry against evil men, will not judge these appearances to be incredible."

The desertion of the national God of Judea for a universal God, who looks with equal favor on men, came at a comparatively late day. Three centuries and a half before Paul, Alexander had united all the countries of western Asia under his sceptre, and this dominion with the oppor-

Digitized by Google

tunities which it gave to his soldiers to see the superstitions of the Babylonians, Hindoos, Jews, Egyptians and Phœnicians could not but place the absurdity of their exclusive systems in a strong light. After the downfall of the Grecian empire, the Romans came with a still greater dominion. It would have been singular, indeed, if, under these circumstances, no teacher had arisen to attempt to establish in all parts of the great empire the doctrine that there was but one God, and that he looked upon all his earthly children with equal favor. Had a teacher risen in some semi-barbarous tribe, such as the Israelites are represented to have been in time of Samuel, when they had no intercourse with foreigners, but hated them all bitterly, and looked upon Jehovah as one of many divinities, who had an especial favor for them, and to whom, in return, they rendered an exclusive worship—if a teacher had risen in such a tribe to teach a universal God and a form-free religion, we might be surprised; but not in Judea, in the time of the Cesars, when all the ancient forms of faith were losing their credit, and when the people generally were ready to receive such a creed as Paul taught.

§ 86. The priests monópolised all the learning in the early ages, and were the discoverers of the art of writing. As they were the ministers of the Gods, they were supposed to know the divine will. Their ordinances were of divine authority. Their writing was miraculous to the eyes of the astonished barbarian, who saw bones, leaves and skins which could speak: and the sacredness of the writing was transferred from the mysterious character to the matter recorded with it. All scripture was sacred once; many nations had no uninspired books; history, poetry, proverbs, laws, love-songs—all were from the hand of God. As the productions of a God were much more reverenced than those of a man, the ancient lawgivers generally asserted that their laws had been dictated by the Gods: and this conduct was generally approved even by those, who fully understood the deception.

§ 87. The idea of a God-begotten child might, and did arise in two ways. Girls, and more especially the women employed in the temples, who had consecrated their maidenhood to their divinity, found it very convenient, if they dis-

Digitized by Google

covered themselves in the family-way, to declare that they had been impregnated by a God. Such assertions made in the times, when Jupiter and Apollo were still the popular deities, and when the fables of their amorous adventures were received with universal faith, appeared probable enough in themselves, and no one could, or would prove them to be untrue. In some cases, a great genius was thought to show such transcendent powers that he could not be entirely of mortal parentage. The mortal maternity could not well be evaded; but human paternity never could be proved, and sometimes was denied.

§ 88. The Biblical glorification of David, and the prophetic promise that the throne should belong to his family forever, was, if we consider all the circumstances, natural enough. Nothing was more probable than that a usurper should desire the priests to prophesy the perpetuity of his dynasty—a prophecy which might have much influence to secure its own fulfilment: and the priests would not be likely to deny the request of a powerful monarch—when the grant of it could do them personally no harm; for there was no probability that their prophecy could be falsified in their own generation. It was natural too, that David should be represented in a later age as the especial favorite of Jehovah. His dynasty was still on the throne—to glorify him was to flatter and please his royal descendants. Besides as his reign had been the most glorious in the annals of the nation, it was but reasonable to presume that he had been the greatest favorite of a deity, who was supposed to reward and punish virtue and vice in this world, with the abundance of material prosperity, or the bitterness of misery.

§ 89. The New Testament doctrine of passive submission, absurd and impolitic as it would be for us, in this age, was natural and even necessary for Jesus and the apostles. The Messiah, expected by the Jews, was to lead them to revolt against the foreign oppressor, reëstablish the independence of the nation, and elevate it to its ancient splendor. The Romans, acquainted with this Jewish expectation of a Messiah, and the character attributed to him, would naturally keep a sharp look-out and be ready to seize any one who should assume that name. Resistance

Digitized by Google

to the Roman power was the height of folly: the only safety lay in the most abject submission. No ordinary denial of treasonable intention, on the part of a man claiming to be the Messiah, could satisfy the Romans: their confidence could be gained only by a declaration made with extraordinary solemnity. This solemnity might be attained by laying down the religious principles that all persons in authority hold their positions by the selection of the Deity, that any resistance to them is sinful, and that all kinds of injustice must be submitted to in peace. We may doubt whether Jesus enunciated these principles: but his so-called apostles certainly did and they were under the influence of the same motives.

Among the numerous priests were many devout and good men, who gave their lives to study and left valuable writings. These were sifted and the best points adopted by later writers. In this manner it was, I imagine, that the New Testament contains so many passages which please the contemplative, serious, devout man—such as "the kingdom of God is within you", &c. These were not composed by Jesus and the Apostles, but were compiled from a multitude of writers.

If there be any sublime dogmas in Christianity, which might be supposed to be too grand or mysterious to have had their origin in the human mind, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Atonement, are certainly among the chief of these. And yet these, we know, are among the first portions of the system which are discarded by independent thinkers. Besides, they are not only older than Jesus, but we know, beyond a doubt, that they are older than the time of Moses; and no reasonable theory has ever been offered for explaining how, if true, Moses rejected them, and Jesus or his Apostles failed to state the manner in which they were first communicated from heaven to men. The whole tone of the New Testament, in so far as it offers these dogmas at all, is to offer them as original. If there be anything in the language of the New Testament which may seem to shew a superhuman authorship, let the reader turn to Plato, Epictetus, Socrates, Confucius and the books of the Boodhists, and he will find ideas not less sublime, and expressions not less devout.

Digitized by Google

When Abraham migrated from his native land and settled in Canaan, Jehovah became a family-god to the patriarch, who should, according to the customs of those times, have selected some other family-god, if Jehovah had not offered himself. Laban had his family-gods, and Rachel carried them off with her, when Jacob fled from the house of his father-in-law (*Gen.* *XXXI.* 30). When the descendants of Abraham had grown to be more numerous than their masters, and when no doubt, they would naturally have thought of throwing off an oppressive yoke, *then* their God ordered them to leave Egypt. When they had become an independent nation, and when it was necessary that they should have a code of laws for their government, and when sensible men among them must have occupied their minds with the formation of such a code, *then* Jehovah gave them laws. When all the people of Western Asia believed in the immediate divine administration of earthly affairs, *then* Moses taught that doctrine by divine revelation. When the majority of the Jews had learned the dogma of the soul's immortality from surrounding heathen nations, *then* Jesus came "to bring life and immortality to light". When the whole known world was comprised under one dominion, and that the dominion of a nation which was not priest-ridden: when the skeptical philosophy of Socrates, Anaxagoras, Epicurus, Plato and Aristotle—for all these were skeptics towards the popular religions of their age—had circulated throughout the universal empire for centuries: when the pretensions of the different petty nations of Western Asia to be the exclusive favorites of the deity had become matter of ridicule to reflecting men generally, *then* Paul appeared and taught that all men were alike before God. Jehovah waited until heathen philosophers had exploded the superstitions to which in earlier ages he had lent his countenance. After men had cleared away the difficulties, he was willing to step in and claim the credit of teaching a new truth! Unfortunately for the claims of Jehovah, we know that these "new truths", as he calls them, were familiar to learned men, while they were tearing down the superstitions which prevented their reception, and long before the work of demolition was so far advanced that Jehovah ventured to promulgate his only saving doctrines.

Digitized by Google

We might expect that a religious system, which had a miraculous origin, should also be protected from corruption by supernatural influence. Such protection, Christianity certainly had not in former centuries, and has not in our own. Its corruptions are universally admitted. As it was conceived and taught and extensively received in a natural manner, so it was corrupted and maintained, and so it will, at last, like other superstitions, be discarded, hated, and despised.

CHAPTER XVI.

BIBLICAL MIRACLES.

> "Were miracles really indispensable for religious improvement and consolation, heaven forbid there should be any limits to our credulity".—R. W. MACKAY.

§ 90. The testimony upon which the Hebrew prophets and Christian apostles relied for the proof of their divine mission, and for the proof of their doctrines, was that derived from the miracles which they wrought. When Moses was sent to the enslaved Hebrews, he was directed by Jehovah to perform miracles in proof of his divine authority (*Ex. IV.* 8. 9), and this was the only kind of testimony to which he ever appealed for the truth of his teachings, during the period of forty years that he was the political chief, and moral and religious instructor of his tribe. All the prophets considered miraculous power as the proper and chief testimony of their Jehovistic commission, and the apostles of Jesus held a similar opinion. Throughout the Old and New Testament, the alleged miracles are invariably referred to as the most important confirmation of the truth of their doctrines. Jesus said "The works which I do in my Father's name—they bear witness of me" (*John*

Digitized by Google

X. 25). And when he endeavored to convert the inhabitants of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, he offered no testimony save miracles *(Mat. XI.* 20–24). Until the middle of the last century, all the apologists of Christianity appealed to miracles as their chief testimony: and Paley, in his *Evidences*, rested his case on that testimony alone. Of late, the reports of miracles have been received with great distrust, and the advocates of the Bible make less reference to them now than formerly, but still bring them forward occasionally. If, however, the Christians should not produce their alleged miracles as proof of their Scriptures, then the freethinkers would insist on having them brought forward as proof of the falsehood of Christianity. In this chapter, I propose not only to deny the validity of the testimony offered, but to expose the dishonesty implied in the offer.

§ 91. *What is a miracle?* The writers of the Bible understood a "miracle" to mean a wonderful, or an unusual event. The prophets and apostles had no conception of natural laws. For them all, the usual phenomena of nature were providential—done by the immediate hand of a personal God. The miraculous differed from the providential only as a rarity: there was for them nothing improbable in the nature of the miracle, much less incredible, or impossible. Everything occurred in accordance with the all-ruling and immediately-operating will of Jehovah: and as much exertion of the divine will and power was required to let the sun go on, as to let him stop. A deity upon whom every event in the universe is as directly dependent as the motions of the figures, in a puppet-show, on the man who pulls the wires—a deity who came down to earth repeatedly, and commissioned men to teach his doctrines—such a deity might be expected to perform miracles: in fact, if such a deity were to be discovered now, he would be a miracle himself. When we examine the reported miracles of the Bible, however, we find that they are inconsistent with the laws of nature, as we understand them. The stoppage of the sun, the changing of a stick into a serpent, the creation of toads, and lice, and locusts by a word, the instantaneous cure of blindness and lameness, without resort to any of the means known to medical art—all these are among the

Digitized by Google

reported miracles of the Bible, and all are inexplicable by the laws of nature, as we understand them. And the appeal to them as proof of supernatural power requires us to look upon them as what we would call violations of the laws of nature: for if they were done in accordance with those laws, they would prove no more than natural power, and could not honestly be brought forward as evidence of a divine commission. Locke, Hume, and Johnson, in the last century, understood the Biblical miracles to be alleged violations of the laws of nature, and so I shall treat them here.

§ 92. *What testimony may suffice to prove a miracle?* To this question it is difficult to give a precise answer. No man now living has ever seen a miracle; and it is difficult for any one to say what he should do, if he were placed in an entirely new position. That a very considerable amount of testimony would be required, every sensible man will admit. If a witness in court were to testify that a certain person, in comfortable circumstances, in robust health, and of regular habits, had eaten his breakfast every morning during a certain week, when the witness had an opportunity of observing him, the testimony would be listened to without surprise, and believed without hesitation. But if the witness were to testify that the person in question ate two hundred pounds of ten-penny nails for breakfast, every morning during a week, the testimony would be listened to with surprise and incredulity. But why should people believe in one case and not in the other? Because one statement agrees with our experience, and the other does not. In regard to the latter statement, we must believe either that the man ate the nails, or that the witness lies; and it is as much within our experience that men do lie, as that they do not eat nails.

Testimony is of various degrees of strength. Human testimony increases in weight with the number and general respectability of the witnesses, and the perceptible force of the motives which should lead them to speak the truth. The testimony which should suffice to convince us that a man was in the habit of eating two hundred pounds of nails for breakfast, would have to come either from a great number of witnesses, or from several known to be educated, sen-

Digitized by Google

sible, truthful, to have carefully scrutinized the alleged wonder, and to have no motive, in this case, for testifying falsely. The oaths of a dozen men, of whom we know nothing, except from the contents of their affidavits, would not suffice, and he who should offer them as conclusive proof would be considered either dishonest or unwise. Men naturally ask for the best testimony which can be had before believing any wonderful story. In the case of a sensible phenomena, the best testimony is to be found in the senses of each individual man. There is nothing so satisfactory as the evidence of one's own eyes.

If the evidence of the senses cannot be had, and if human testimony be offered to prove a miraculous event, then the investigator must weigh the testimony according to probabilities as observed in his experience. He has no other resource. "Though experience * be our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact, it must be acknowledged that this guide is not altogether infallible, but in some cases may lead us into errors. One who, in our climate, should expect better weather in the first week of June than in the first week of March, would reason justly and conformably to experience; but it is certain that he may happen in the event to find himself mistaken. However, we may observe, that in such a case, he would have no cause to complain of experience, for it informed him beforehand of the uncertainty, by that contrariety of events which he might have learned from a diligent observation. All effects follow not with like certainty from their supposed causes. Some events are found in all countries and in all ages to have been constantly conjoined together; others are found to have been more variable, and sometimes to disappoint our expectations, so that in reasoning concerning matters of fact, there are all imaginable degrees of assurance, from the highest certainty to the lowest species of moral evidence. A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence. In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible experience, he expects the event with the last degree of assurance, and regards his past experience as a full proof of the future existence of that event. In other cases, he proceeds with more caution: he weighs the oppo-

* HUME. Essay on Miracles.

Digitized by Google

site experiments: he considers which side is supported by the greater number of experiments—to that side he inclines, with doubt and hesitation; and when at last he fixes his judgment, the evidence exceeds not what we properly call probability. All probability, then, supposes an opposition of experiments and observations, where one side is found to overbalance the other, and to produce a degree of evidence proportioned to the superiority. A hundred instances or experiments on one side, and fifty on another, afford a doubtful expectation of any event; though a hundred uniform experiments, with only one that is contradictory, reasonably beget a pretty strong degree of assurance. In all cases, we must balance the opposite experiments, where they are opposite, and deduct the smaller number from the greater, in order to know the exact force of the superior evidence.

* * * * * *

"The plain consequence is (and it is a general maxim of much value to guide us in forming our opinions of all wonderful tales,) that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish; and even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior. When any one tells me that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other, and according to the superiority which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous than the event which he relates, then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion."

This is the only safe method of reasoning upon probabilities: and it is on such principles of probability that evidence is treated in courts of law. It is, however, as before remarked, in the very nature of probability to differ from certainty, which a man may be said to have when he sees a thing with his own eyes. A man who reasons in the

Digitized by Google

most careful and judicious manner, from probabilities, may err. Thus Locke relates that "it happened to a Dutch ambassador who was entertaining the king of Siam with the particularities of Holland, which the monarch was very inquisitive after, among other things told him that the water in his country, would sometimes in cold weather, be so hard, that men walked upon it, and it would bear an an elephant, if he were there. To which the king replied, 'Hitherto I have believed the strange things you have told me, because I looked upon you as a sober fair man; but now, I know, you lie.'" But the king reasoned wisely though he rejected the truth, and he deserved much more respect than if he had implicitly believed, with equally ready faith, those tales which accorded with his experience and those which did not. If I meet an acquaintance in comfortable circumstances, good health, and regular mode of life, who tells me at noon that he has eaten breakfast, I believe him without hesitation: and if I afterwards discover that he lied to me, that will not show that I acted injudiciously in believing him.

"In a word, * to submit our belief implicitly and indifferently to the mere force of authority in all cases, whether miraculous or natural, without any rule of discerning the credible from the incredible, might support indeed the faith as it is called, but would certainly destroy the use of all history, by leading us into perpetual errors, and possessing our minds with invincible prejudices and false notions both of men and things. But to distinguish between things totally different from each other, between miracle and nature, the extraordinary acts of God and the ordinary transactions of man, to suspend our belief of the one, while, on the same testimony, we grant it freely to the other, and to require a different degree of evidence for each in proportion to the different degrees of their credibility, is so far from hurting the credit of history, or of anything else which we ought to believe, that it is the only way to purge history from its dross, and to render it beneficial to us, and by a right use of our reason and judgment, to raise our minds above the low prejudices andd childish superstitions of the credulous vulgar."

* Dr. Conyers Middleton.

Digitized by Google

§ 93. *Were the miracles reported in the Bible actually wrought?* The Christian will answer in the affirmative, and in support of them say that the testimony of the word of God is sufficient. But we are now considering whether the Bible is the word of God, and whether the miracles prove it to be so. If the miracles are to prove the inspiration, it will not do to make the inspiration prove them. They must be examined precisely on the same principles as we would examine similar stories in profane books. The witnesses of the miracles recorded in the four Gospels, are at most four; and two of these, Mark and Luke, it is generally admitted, were not eye-witnesses of any of the miracles of Jesus. The books known by their names, do not claim that the authors were eye-witnesses of the events recorded. Then we are reduced to two witnesses, Matthew and John, and if we receive their testimony as of no higher authority than that of men generally, we must reject the accounts of the miracles at once: and if we receive them as of higher authority, we presumptuously decide in advance the question at issue—whether they deserve to be considered as of higher authority. If a dozen priests in Mexico were to publish an account of a miracle done in their presence, would any enlightened man believe them? Would a sensible man think seriously of believing them? Yet, why are they not as worthy of belief as the twelve apostles? When we read of the miracles wrought by the relics of saints, and idols of the Virgin, in Catholic countries, do we imagine for a moment that there is any truth in them? Does it matter to us that ten thousand, or a hundred thousand pious, simple-hearted pilgrims have gone, and seen, and went away believing? No; trusting to our experience of the dishonesty of priests, and the credulity of the people, we conclude at once, that there is an imposture, and that there is no violation of the laws of nature. The fact is, as confessed by Dr. Arnold, * Christians believe the Biblical miracles only on the testimony of the Bible, as a book of divine authority; and, of course, they cannot turn about, and prove the divine authority by the miracles, without being guilty of reasoning in a circle. Thus, the miraculous proof of Christianity vanishes in smoke, and instead of it we have Biblical proof of mira-

* Edinburgh Review, No. 174.

Digitized by Google

cles, which will also vanish in smoke, if I mistake not, before we are done with it.

Before examining the particular miracles recorded in the Bible, let us look a little farther at the kind of testimony which we should have to prove a miracle. If a personal god should see fit to give a revelation for the benefit of all mankind, we might anticipate that he would put it forth in such a shape that it should appear true to every man, we might expect that he would furnish proof of its truth as clear to one man as to another : and in every case the best evidence possible. In courts of law, the judge always demands the best evidence which can be had : he will never take hearsay testimony when he can get that of eye-witnesses. What the jury can see with their own eyes, they are not permitted to see through the eyes of others. And in the case of miracles, it is evident that the only entirely satisfactory evidence can be that of each one's own senses. Until we have that evidence there can be room for doubt : after that, there can be none. "A miracle is no miracle at second-hand." But we find that the Bible puts us off with hearsay testimony. Divine truth ought to be as precious to me as it was to the ancient Jews : I ought to be as precious to Jehovah as they were : yet he gave them the testimony of their senses, and tells me to be satisfied with their tales of his doings.

If we must take hearsay testimony then to prove an event contrary to all our experience, we should demand that the witness understood the nature of the events, scrutinized them with a care corresponding to their wonderful character, and shows in his testimony that he took such care, by reporting such particulars, as a careful investigator should make himself familiar with. But we find that in the Bible no particulars are recorded : we have not one special day or month of a solitary alleged miracle : in many cases we have not the name of a single witness. Again we find that the writers of the Bible had no conception of the impossibility or improbability of miracles : they supposed that miracles were done every day : they were credulous, and ready to believe assertions which we should only laugh at. They believed that witches, sorcerers, and bad men could work miracles. Their belief was the com-

Digitized by Google

mon belief of that age: and we know that people in general then supposed miracles to be an almost every day occurrence. Indeed, not comprehending the operation of invariable natural laws, they did not see the absurdity of reports of their violation. At that time, the most learned men were incompetent to form clear ideas of the weight of testimony. If a man solemnly asserted that he had seen a priest raise a dead man to life, his assertion was considered sufficient proof of the event, because everybody at that time believed in the power of working miracles and in the daily occurrence of special providences. It is only by education that a man learns to judge of probabilities. A child can be induced to believe almost anything, and the men of ancient times—many even of the most intelligent—were but children as compared with the men of this age. The Emperor Julian, one of the earliest writers against Christianity, did not deny the miracles of Christ, because he did not doubt them. The books of Moses gravely tell us that the Egyptian priests changed their rods by a word into serpents; and another biblical writer says that the Witch of Endor raised the dead Samuel from his grave and caused him to speak to Saul.

In trying cases before courts of law, a witness, in whom much trust is reposed, must not only be intelligent, but he must be subjected to a cross-examination. But the witnesses of the New Testament were not, and cannot be, cross-examined; and we are asked to believe implicitly the testimony taken down by one of the parties. People may take such testimony in theology, but in a court of law it would be promptly rejected.

It is a singular fact, if the Biblical miracles were wrought as reported, that there are no miracles now-a-days, and, in fact, that there never have been any which have come under the immediate observation of great historians or philosophers. Plato, Tacitus, Thucydides and Herodotus do not report anything incredible to modern skepticism, as having been observed by themselves; nor do Grote, Gibbon or Hume give credit to any tales of miraculous events in their respective histories. Wherever the people are ignorant and superstitious, there, according to report, miracles are abundant; but wherever there are learned and skeptical men,

Digitized by Google

miracles disappear, or if there be any reports of miracles, they are looked upon as tricks to cheat the ignorant. "Whatever* be the uncertainty of ancient history, there is one thing at least which we may certainly learn from it—that human nature has been always the same; agitated by the same appetites and passions, and liable to the same excesses and abuses of them in all ages and countries of the world; so that our experience of what passes in the present age will be the best comment on what is delivered to us as concerning the past. To apply it, then, to the case before us: there is hardly a single fact [fraudulent miracle] which I have charged upon the primitive times, but what we still see performed in one or other of the sects of Christians [Mormons, Spiritualists, etc.] of even our own times. Among some, we see diseases cured, devils cast out, and all the other miracles which are said to have been wrought in the primitive Church; among others, we see the boasted gifts of Tertullians' and Cyprian's days, pretended revelations, prophetic visions and divine impressions. Now, all these modern pretensions we readily ascribe to their true cause, to the artifices and craft of a few, playing upon the credulity, the superstition and the enthusiasm of the many, for the sake of some private interest. When we read, therefore, that the same things were performed by the ancients, and for the same ends of acquiring a superiority of credit, or wealth, or power, over their fellow-creatures, how can we possibly hesitate to impute them to the same cause of fraud or imposture?"

We shall now make a brief mention of some of the Biblical reports of miracles, confining our attention chiefly to those recorded in the New Testament.

The report of the arrest of the sun at Joshua's command to permit him to kill the Amorites (*Josh*. X. 12–14), has no title to credence. Such an event could not have happened without a record being made of it in China, Persia, India, and Egypt—countries where astronomy was studied, where observations were taken, and where records were preserved, but where no record is to be found of this miracle. The writer of the book of *Joshua* evidently had no idea of the nature of such a miracle, or he would have explained how

* Dr. Middleton.

Digitized by Google

it happened that no damage was done by a sudden stoppage of the earth in her rotation—such a stoppage, as if it were to happen now, would destroy the human race and all their works. Yet, we know that there are buildings standing in Egypt which were erected before the alleged time of Joshua. Besides, the book of *Joshua* quotes the book of *Jasher* as authority for the report of the miracle, but the latter book was not written until the time of the Kings.

Joshua stopped the sun; but Isaiah compelled that luminary to turn round and travel backward for more than half an hour in time, and ten degrees in distance, (*Is. XXXVIII.* 7, 8; 2 *K.*, *XX.* 8–11). This miracle is reported to have happened only 700 years before Christ; but it wants the confirmation which it would have had, if true, in the records of China, Hindostan, Egypt and Greece.

Matthew (*IV.* 18, 19) and Mark (*I.* 16–20) say that Jesus selected Peter as an apostle while the latter was fishing in the sea of Galilee. Luke (*V.* 1–11) tells of the calling, and *adds* a miraculous draught of fishes. John (*XXI.* 2) makes another addition of a miraculous fire to cook the fish, and he also changes the date of the event, and makes it happen after the resurrection. John wrote after Luke, and Luke after Mark and Matthew. Hennell remarks that "In such instances the gradual enhancement is very different from wilful falsehood, since the additional particulars doubtless seemed no less probable in themselves than edifying to the Church." It has been by some writers supposed, that the Evangelists referred to different miracles, but that supposition is contradicted by the similarity of the circumstances as related by the different authors. The scene was at the Sea of Galilee: Peter, James and John were present; they were fishing; Jesus promised that Peter should fish for men; the fishermen forsook all to follow him; when Jesus came they had nothing; and Jesus commanded the casting of the net.

Matthew (*III.* 16,) and Mark (*I.* 10,) say that when John baptized Jesus, he saw the spirit descending like a dove. Luke (*III.* 22) says that the spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove. John (*I.* 32) adds, that this had been foretold by John the Baptist.

The miracle of turning water into wine, at the marriage

Digitized by Google

in Cana, is reported only by John (*II.* 1), though "it did manifest forth the glory" of Jesus. John says "When they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him—'They have no wine.'" On this, Hennell observes that "There is no reason why Jesus should be applied to for wine, which it was the duty of the host to furnish; but however unnatural the application in reality, it was quite natural on the part of the writer who was to prepare the way for the event." Yet even after this miracle, Jesus' relatives, who were present, did not believe on him.

Matthew says (*VIII.* 15) that Christ healed Peter's wife's mother, and "the fever left her, and she arose and ministered unto them." Mark says (*I.* 31), "immediately the fever left her and she ministered unto them". Luke (*IV.* 38, 39) says: "it was a great fever", and "immediately she arose and ministered unto them". "Now, the variations", as Hennell remarks, "though perhaps made innocently, are important; for the reality of the miracle depends upon the greatness of the fever and upon the patient's exhibiting immediately some visible sign of recovery, such as rising."

The miracle of the casting out of the demons loses nothing in its progress. Matthew (*VIII.* 16), says "They brought unto him *many* that were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and cured all that were sick." Mark says (*I.* 32), "They brought unto him *all* that were diseased, and them that were possessed with demons, *and all the city was gathered together at the door*, and he healed *many* that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many demons, and suffered *not* the demons to speak, because they knew him." Now hear Luke (*IV.* 40), "*All* they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him, and he laid hands on *every one* of them, and healed them, and demons also came out of many, crying out and saying: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of God'; and he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, for they knew that he was Christ." Luke's story is clearly marked by the characteristics of priestly fraud.

In *Matthew* (*IX.* 2–8), a miraculous cure of palsy is related. Christ said to the afflicted man: "'Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy house': and he arose and de-

Digitized by Google

parted to his house." Mark says *(II.* 12), "And *immediately* he arose, took up the bed and went forth *before them all.*" Luke *(V.* 25), says "And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, *glorifying God.*"

Matthew (*XIV.* 15–22), Mark (VI. 37–44) Luke (*IX.* 12), and John *(VI.* 11) tell of a miraculous feeding of five thousand persons; and in *Matthew (XV.* 38), and *Mark (VIII.* 9), it is said that four thousand persons were miraculously fed. These accounts are evidently confused reports of the same tradition or event. That the same event is referred to is clear, because the narratives agree with each other in the order of the speeches and events, and nearly of words; because, according to the latter story, the actors do not remember the first miracle, but ask—"Whence have we bread in the wilderness to satisfy so great a multitude?" and Jesus, in his answer, shows a like unconsciousness of any similar occurrence; because the event occurred near the sea of Galilee in each case; and because after each miracle, Jesus sends the multitude away, and passes over the sea. Matthew and Mark evidently thought that there were two separate miracles (*XVI.* 9. 10.), (*Mark VIII.* 19. 20), while, according to John (*VI.* 26, 30–32), both Jesus and the people speak as though there had been no miracle.

Matthew (*VIII.* 5), and Luke *(VII.* 1–10), relate the circumstances of a miraculous cure of a Centurion's servant. John relates a similar cure of the son of a nobleman or ruler. All say the event happened at Capernaum soon after the Sermon on the Mount, and relate the miracle in similar terms, and ascribe nearly the same words to Jesus. Everything goes to show that the Evangelists referred to the same event or report. Matthew describes the sick person in Greek as a *pais* or boy. Luke supposed the boy to be a servant, and called him *doulos*, a servant: and John supposed the boy to be a son, and called him *vios*, a son.

Mark (*X.* 46–52) relates the miraculous and immediate cure of a blind man by Jesus, while the latter was going *from* Jericho. Luke (*XVIII.* 35) tells of a cure of a blind man while Jesus was going *to* Jericho. John (*IX.* 6–11) adds, that the miracle was not immediate, and that the man

Digitized by Google

did not see till he had gone to the pool of Siloam. Matthew has two miraculous cures of two blind men (*IX.* 27, *XX.* 30), in the place of Mark's one cure of one blind man. The expressions and incidents are so similar that they must have been confused accounts of the same legend.

Matthew tells (*XVII.* 18) of the miraculous and immediate cure of a lunatic ; but Mark (*IX.* 25), says the cure was not immediate.

The barren fig tree, cursed by Christ, withered immediately according to Matthew (*XXI*, 19), but Mark says it was found withered the next day.

John says there was a voice from Heaven (*XII.* 28. 29), but some thought it was thunder.

Matthew (*IX.* 18), Mark (*V.* 22), and Luke (*VIII.* 41), record the recall of Jairus' daughter to life. These three authors admit that they were not present, but say that John was there. He, however, says nothing about it in his evangel.

The miracle of recalling the dead Lazarus to life, as narrated by John (*XI.* 43), was the most splendid of all the miracles. The writer does not profess to have been present on the occasion, and the narrative is indirectly contradicted by Matthew (*XX.* 29–*XXI.* 1) and Mark (*X.* 46–*XI.* 1) and Luke (*XIX.* 1-37). Hennell says "Neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke appear to have had any knowledge of the affair ; for they are not only silent concerning it, but their accounts do not easily admit of its introduction. John puts the supper at which Lazarus sat after his resurrection, one day before the public entry into Jerusalem. But Matthew, as well as Mark and Luke, makes it appear that Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem on coming direct from Jericho, a distance of about twenty miles ; and that after this he took up his abode at Bethany. John's story of Lazarus requires, therefore, another previous abode at Bethany, which breaks in violently upon the order of events in Matthew, whose narrative seems to exclude the possibility of Jesus having already resided for some time so near to Jerusalem as fifteen furlongs (see *Mat. XIX.* 1 : *XX.* 18. 29 ; *XXI.* 1). The supper at Bethany also is related by Matthew long after the entrance, although he is not precise as to the date (*XXVI.* 6). This supper is

Digitized by Google

proved to be the same one at which John says Lazarus was present, by the alabaster box of ointment, and the speech of Judas for the poor. Yet Matthew and Mark seem quite ignorant of that which John says attracted the Jews—the presence of the revived Lazarus. The story of Lazarus seems again to be forced upon the attention of the first three Evangelists, when they relate the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, and the conduct of the multitude; for John says that the people bare record of his having raised Lazarus. But here, also, they make not the slightest allusion to it. It is impossible to conceive any plausible reason for this concealment, when the same three Evangelists appear so willing to relate all the miracles they were acquainted with, and actually relate some that were said to be done in secret. That they had all forgotten this miracle so completely, that it did not once occur to them whilst relating the connected circumstances, cannot be imagined; and if any miracle deserved a preference in the eyes of narrators disposed to do honor to Christ, or even to give a faithful account of him, it was this. The *Acts* and the Epistles nowhere allude to this story, although it would have afforded Paul a very good instance of the resurrection of the body (1 *Cor. XV.* 35). The first mention, therefore, of the most public and decisive of the miracles, appears in a writing published at Ephesus, sixty years afterwards—a distance both of time and place, which rendered it easy to publish fictitious statements without fear of contradiction."

F. W. Newman remarks on this miracle, "John wrote fifty or sixty years after the events; when the other disciples were all dead; when Jerusalem was destroyed, her priests and learned men dispersed, her nationality dissolved, her coherence annihilated;—he wrote in a tongue foreign to the Jews of Palestine, and for a foreign people, in a distant country, and in the bosom of an admiring and confiding church, which was likely to venerate him the more, the greater marvels he asserted concerning their Master. He told them miracles of first-rate magnitude, which none before had recorded. Is it possible for me to receive them on his word, under circumstances so conducive to delusion, and without a single check to ensure his veracity?"

The transfiguration of Christ is mentioned by Matthew

Digitized by Google

(*XVII.* 2), Mark (*IX.* 2), and Luke (*IX.* 28), but neither one of these was present, while John, who is reported to have been present, says nothing of it. The three Evangelists, who speak of the transfiguration, say that Jesus cautioned those present to keep the event a secret.

Matthew's story (*XXVII.* 63,) of the guard at the tomb of Jesus bears the mark of fiction. The Pharisees are made to say :—"We remember that deceiver said while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again." From *John* (*XX.* 9), it appears that Jesus never said so even to his disciples. The guard story is not alluded to in any other portion of the New Testament. The disciples did not expect a resurrection (*Luke XXIV.* 11 ; *Mark XVI.* 11 ; *John XX.* 29 ; *Matthew XXVIII.* 17), and how should the Pharisees? "That the guard," remarks Greg, "placed by the Sanhedrim at the tomb, all trembling with affright from the apparition (*Mat. XXVIII.* 4), should have been at once, and so easily persuaded to deny the vision, and propagate a lie ;—that the Sanhedrim, instead of angrily and contemptuously scouting the story of the soldiers, charging them with having slept, and threatening them with punishment, should have believed their statement, and, at the same time, in full conclave, resolved to bribe them into silence and falsehood;—that Roman soldiers, who could scarcely commit a more heinous offense than to sleep upon their post, should so willingly have accepted money to accuse themselves of such a breach of duty—all these are suppositions, too improbable to be readily allowed—especially when the 13th verse indicates subsequent Jewish rumor as the foundation of the story, and when the utter silence of all the other Evangelists and Apostles respecting a narrative which, if true, would be so essential a feature in their preaching of the resurrection, is duly borne in mind."

In giving his last blessing to his disciples, Jesus said that "these signs shall follow them that believe ; * * * they shall speak with new tongues" (*Mark XVI.* 7). In accordance with this promise, we find that the twelve apostles, after the ascension, were gifted with a familiar knowledge of all languages "under heaven" (*Acts II.* 1–12). Neither did the miracle cease immediately, for many years later Paul wrote, "divers kinds of tongues" were "given by

Digitized by Google

the Spirit to the members of the church (1. *Cor. XII.* 10) The miraculous communication of foreign languages would have been of great practical benefit to apostles who were to preach the Gospel to all the world, and it was such a miracle as might be expected, if any were wrought. Of course, we are to presume that if Jehovah were to communicate a language by inspiration, it would be given so as to be used with propriety, accuracy, and ease. If such miraculous communication had been made to any of the followers of Jesus, we might presume that it would be made to the Evangelists and Apostles, who were inspired not only to preach the gospel, but also to make a permanent record of it. But when we come to examine the Greek of the New Testament, the language which was the most important to the Apostles, and in which they preached and wrote, we find that it is, as Campbell calls it, 'a barbarous dialect.' "If any one contends," says Erasmus, "that the Apostles were inspired by God, with the knowledge of all tongues, and that this gift was perpetual in them, since everything which is performed by a divine power is more perfect, according to St. Chrysostom, than what is performed either in the ordinary course of nature, or by the pains of man, how comes it to pass that the language of the Apostles is not only rough and unpolished, but imperfect: also confused, and sometimes even plainly solecising and absurd; for we cannot possibly deny what the fact itself declares to be true." Neander confesses that "In the history of the first propagation of Christianity, traces are never found of a supernatural gift for the purpose of spreading the Gospel. Ancient tradition, which names several persons as interpreters of the Apostles, implies the contrary." Gibbon remarks that "The knowledge of foreign languages was frequently communicated to the contemporaries of Irenæus, though Irenæus himself was left to struggle with the difficulties of a barbarous dialect, whilst he preached the Gospel to the natives of Gaul."

Such are the reports of the most important Biblical miracles—bearing their falsehood marked upon their brows. We shall hereafter see (*Ch. XXI,*) that all of the Gospels were written more than thirty years after the death of Jesus, and after the destruction of Jerusalem, when detec-

Digitized by Google

tion in falsehood had become improbable, if not impossible. "But" asks Hennell "if the reader will still hold the reality of these miracles, to what scheme must he have recourse? That God has caused a deviation from the course of nature for the instruction of mankind, and has left the account of it to be conveyed to them by means which, on the closest examination, occasions it to bear a strong resemblance to human fictions: a supposition so monstrous and perplexing, that notwithstanding the value of the supposed lesson, our minds turn at last from this mode of teaching in weariness, and resolves to be contented to learn where we are sure, at least, that the lessons proceed from God himself—and that is in nature."

I do not imagine that any portion of the four Gospels deserves to be received as historically true, unless it be corroborated by some other authority: and all the reports of miracles and the attendant circumstances are probably mere inventions. Nevertheless, if we receive them as trustworthy narratives, "it is worthy * of especial note, that to the last, in defiance of the numerous, astonishing, and public miracles recorded in the Gospels,—of many of which as the raising of Lazarus, and the cure of the blind man (*John IX.*) the Pharisees and chief men are said to have been witnesses—the incredulity of these Rulers and of the Sanhedrim remained unshaken. It is evident too that it was a sincere and genuine disbelief—not merely a refusal to accept the inference of the divine mission of Christ, on the ground of his miraculous power, but a disbelief in the miraculous power itself—or at least of its being miraculous beyond the tricks of common jugglers. They were *exasperated*, but no way *intimidated*, by the wonders which he wrought before them. Had they really supposed that he could cure the blind, heal the lame, command the spirits, still the waves, raise the dead (in a different manner, and with a different degree and kind of power from their own thaumaturgists)—still more, had they seen any one of these awful evidences of supernatural power—then however, hostile their ambition and selfishness might be to his pretensions, they would have dreaded to provoke his enmity, or to practise against his safety, satisfied as they must have

* GREG. Creed of Christendom.

Digitized by Google

been, that he could not only foresee and baffle their machinations, but could inflict a fearful retaliation. But we see nothing of all this:—they feared, not him, but the people who were friendly to him: they more than once openly attacked him, and tempted him, even by taunts, to a display of his supernatural gifts:—in a word, their whole conduct shows that his miracles, whatever they were, had not gone any way toward producing in their minds a conviction, or even a fear, of his supernatural power."

Can we place any faith in these reported miracles of the New Testament, when our only testimony is hearsay, which comes to us from persons who are not known to us to have been eye-witnesses, who were superstitious, and whose books may have been very much corrupted, without our being able to detect it? But if we believe them, then we shall be under obligation to believe a great many other reported miracles, which are much better attested. Nearly every one of the celebrated fathers of the Christian Church previous to the seventh century, recorded or credited a number of miracles. Among those fathers who did so record or credit miracles, were Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Origen, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Basil, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, Athenagoras, Eusebius, Augustine, Hesperius, Athanasius, Epiphanius and Theodoret. All of these persons have been honored with the title of Saint by the Catholic Church, among the members of which during their time, they had no superiors in intelligence or ability; and most of them left writings of importance to show that the Gospel is now preserved as it was in their time. They are persons, whose character and acts are known to us from contemporary history, whereas we know nothing of the Evangelists, save what we find in their own books, or in traditions, which cannot be traced beyond the beginning, and some of them not beyond the end, of the second century. The Christian Fathers, above mentioned, whose works have far better evidence for their genuineness than there are for the evangels, attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, corroborate each other in regard to the power of the Church to perform miracles, and in regard to the frequency of miracles; and

Digitized by Google

if these two points be well established, there can be little difficulty about accepting particular miracles. But when the nature of the miracles witnessed by these saints is explained, our faith in both saints and miracles must become faint. Chrysostom, Basil, Jerome, and Augustine, four of the greatest men of the primitive Church, exalt the miraculous power of relics, and it was by these saints as a class, that monkery, the worship of relics, the invocation of saints, prayers for the dead, image worship, the sacraments, the sign of the cross, and the use of consecrated oil were introduced. Gibbon, in the *Decline and Fall* (*Ch. XXVIII.*) has occasion to say :—"The grave and learned Augustine, whose understanding scarcely admits the excuse of credulity, has attested the innumerable prodigies which were performed in Africa by the relics of St. Stephen ; and this marvellous narrative is inserted in the elaborate work of *The City of God*, which the bishop of Hippo designed as a solid and immortal proof of the truth of Christianity. Augustine solemnly declares that he has selected those miracles only, which were publicly certified by persons who were either the objects or the spectators of the power of the martyr. * * * The bishop enumerates above seventy miracles, of which three were resurrections from the dead in two years, and within the limits of his own diocese. * * * The miraculous cure of diseases of the most inveterate or even of preternatural kind, can no longer occasion any surprise, when we recollect that in the days of Irenæus, about the end of the second century, the resurrection of the dead was very far from being considered an uncommon event : that the miracle was frequently performed on necessary occasions, by great fasting and the joint supplication of the church of the place, and that the persons, thus restored to their prayers, had lived afterwards among them many years." In every imaginable respect, the testimony for these miracles of the Fathers is stronger and more trustworthy than for those of Jesus and his Apostles : and yet no intelligent man in a Protestant country thinks of believing them. We are all satisfied that the Fathers lied : and why shall we not believe the same of the Evangelists ?

But the reports of miracles did not cease with the Fathers : we have them to our own time, and why should

Digitized by Google

there not be miracles as well now as in the time of the Apostles? It is said that their testimony was necessary to establish Christianity, but that such necessity has now passed, and miracles would be superfluous. The Bible speaks of miracles and divinely-inspired prophecies being made every day, or at least frequently, during the whole time covered by the record, more than fifteen hundred years—during a portion of which time the faith of the people in the divine origin of the Church was not less firm than at present. The skeptical tendency of the present age is evident to all intelligent men; the Bible is losing ground every day; and why should not miracles be done to maintain, as well as to build up a creed? Why were there no miracles done in Europe during the French revolution, when twenty millions of enlightened men deserted the Christian Church, and desecrated the temples of the Jehovah with heathen mockeries? But when was Christianity established? It gradually extended from the crucifixion of Christ till the beginning of the last century, when it began to lose ground. There is no place to draw the line short of that. About the year 1700, then, should be considered the date of its establishment, and yet no enlightened person will consent to believe that the power of working miracles existed until the beginning of the eighteenth century. But the New Testament does not authorize any line to be drawn. Jesus is represented to have said, (*Mark XVI.* 17, 18):—"These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The meaning of this sentence is plain—the miraculous power was to follow the faithful forever; and there is nothing in the New Testament to contradict this interpretation. Stephen, Philip, and Paul, who were neither apostles nor disciples of Christ, performed miracles (*Acts VI.* 3, 8. *VII.* 8. *XIII.* 11. *XIV.* 8. *XIX.* 11). Why should not miracles be as proper to convert the Chinese and Hindoos of this age, as the Jews or Greeks eighteen centuries ago? Of what benefit to the Asiatic is it that Christianity is established in Europe, if its evidence be not presented in a convincing form to his mind? When we know

Digitized by Google

that miracles are not wrought in this age, we are very foolish if we believe that they were wrought in any past age.

But if we accept the testimony of the evangelists and apostles to the Biblical miracles, we must reject the contrary testimony of an infinite number of other witnesses: so that not only the miracle destroys the credit of testimony, but the testimony destroys itself. "To make * this the better understood, let us consider that in matters of religion, whatever is different, is contrary, and that it is impossible the religions of ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, and of China should all of them be established on a solid foundation. Every miracle, therefore, pretended to have been wrought in any of these religions (and all of them abound in miracles), as its direct purpose is to establish the particular system to which it is attributed, so has it the same force, though more indirectly, to overthrow every other system. In destroying a rival system, it likewise destroys the credit of those miracles, on which that system was established: so that all the prodigies of different religions are to be regarded as contrary facts: and the evidences of these prodigies, whether weak, or strong, as opposite to each other. According to this method of reasoning, when we believe any miracle of Mahomet, or his successors, we have for our warrant the testimony of a few barbarous Arabians: and on the other hand we are to regard the authority of Titus Livius, Plutarch, Tacitus, and in short, of all the authors and witnesses, Grecian, Chinese, and Roman Catholic, who have related any miracle in their particular religion—I say, we are to regard their testimony in the same light, as if they had mentioned the Mohammedan miracle, and had, in express terms, contradicted it." Thus, we have an incalculably great preponderance of witnesses against the alleged miracles of any one creed, and all must fall to the ground together, if we weigh human testimony according to reasonable probabilities.

When † we deny the alleged miracles of the Bible, we deny the divine authority of the book itself. Nothing is left of Christianity that deserves to be revered as truth. Its essence is gone: its evidence is annihilated. Its truths,

* HUME. Essay on Miracles.

† This paragraph is altered from Norton.

Digitized by Google

involving, as its friends pretend, the highest interests of mankind, the facts which it proclaims, and which would be implied, if it were a divine revelation, rest no longer on the authority of a God, who is distinct from nature. In evidence of those truths, nothing remains but the assertions of a few superstitious priests, whose names, and even the age in which they lived, are matters of grave doubt. It is, indeed, difficult to conjecture, how any one can attach any great value to the teachings of Jesus, after rejecting the belief in his miraculous powers. His whole history, as recorded in the Gospels, is miraculous. It is vain to attempt to strike out what relates directly, or indirectly, to his miraculous authority and works, with the supposition that any coherent, or supremely great truth will remain. Miracles form the substance and groundwork of the narrative, and like the figure of Phidias on Minerva's shield, cannot be erased without spoiling the entire composition. If the accounts of Christ's miracles be mere fictions, then no credit can be due to works so fabulous as the pretended histories of his life. But these supposed miracles, it has been contended, may be explained consistently with the veracity of the reporters as, natural events, the character of which was mistaken by the beholders. At the first glance, it is obvious that such a statement supposes mistakes committed by those beholders, the disciples and apostles of Jesus, hardly consistent with any exercise of intellect: and at the same time renders it very difficult to free his character from the suspicion of intentional fraud. A little farther consideration may satisfy us, that, if Jesus really performed no miracles, the accounts of his life, that have been handed down from his disciples, give evidence of utter folly, or the grossest deception, or rather of both.

§ 94. *What might be proved by the New Testament miracles?* Those acts, reported as miraculous in the New Testament, might prove that the doers had power to do them, or to do other similar acts. The possession of power does not necessarily imply the possession of wisdom. There is no necessary connection between them. Physical power is not dependent upon wisdom or knowledge: and as has already been shown, the biblical authors admitted that wicked men might possess the same miraculous power as

Digitized by Google

good men. It is generally assumed that the ability to do such acts, as the miracles attributed to Jesus, would prove him to possess supernatural power: but I deny this. Whenever we witness a phenomenon—no matter how singular or wonderful it may appear to us—we are required to believe it to be a natural event, which may not have previously come within our experience. "Reason* must be the judge of what is a miracle, and what is not, which—not knowing how far the power of natural causes do extend themselves, and what strange effects they may produce—is very hard to determine. It will always be as great a miracle that God should alter the course of natural things, as overturn the principles of knowledge and understanding in a man, by setting up anything to be received by him as a truth which his reason cannot assent to, as the miracle itself: and so at best it will be but one miracle against another, and the greater still on reason's side: it being harder to believe that God should alter and put out of its ordinary course some phenomenon of the great world for once, and make things act contrary to their ordinary rule, purposely that the mind of man might do so always afterwards, than that this is some fallacy or natural effect, of which he knows not the cause, let it look never so strange." The supernatural is entirely unknown to us: we have no means of recognizing it: its existence is denied by science, and its possibility, as a matter of human knowledge, by philosophy. We can never be certain of knowing all the laws of nature, and until we have such certainty, we cannot know that any given phenomenon is a violation of them. The savage is laughed at who believes a civilized man to be possessed of miraculous power, when he throws a dead body into convulsions with a galvanic battery, or when he, by means of a telescope or a magnetic telegraph, discovers what is going on at a great distance; yet we bear the same relation to Jesus which the savage bears to civilized man. If Christ were to appear in California and perform all the miraculous acts, ascribed to him in the New Testament, he would acquire little credit for the possession of supernatural power. If he should turn water into wine, he would be called a good juggler; if he should cure the blind and lame,

* Locke. Quoted in King's Life of him.

Digitized by Google

and raise the dead, he would be esteemed as an unequalled physician; if he should cause the heavens to grow dark, he would be accounted a great meteorologist; if he rose up to heaven, he would have the credit of having invented a flying machine. But as for any pretension of ability to violate the laws of nature—why the thing is ridiculous. If a man were to order the sun to cease forthwith to shine in clear noonday, and if the sun should so forthwith cease to shine, that man would not be entitled to any more credit than the man who can foretell an eclipse. Their powers would be equally miraculous to a man who knows nothing of astronomy. If, however, it be insisted upon that the restoration of a dead man to life suffice to prove miraculous power, then ought not a good juggler's trick, well performed, prove as much? To breathe fire is as inexplicable by natural laws (as they are understood by educated men generally) as to cure the blind and lame by a word. I have witnessed pieces of legerdemain, at which I am as much puzzled, as I should be at seeing many of the alleged miracles of Jesus. The latter pretends to have supernatural power: the magician does not. The one asks for my money; the other for my faith, knowing that, if he can get that, he will get my money too. If I reason philosophically, I shall not permit these accompanying declarations to make any difference in my views of acts, which in themselves are similar. If the doings of miracle-worker and juggler be equally wonderful, I shall believe that both have supernatural power or that neither has: and if I have a prepossession in favor of either, it should rather be in favor of the professor of legerdemain; for his class has never done any noteworthy evil, while the greatest crimes in history have been owing to the priestly workers of miracles.

The Bible—and on this point few Christians have outgrown the Biblical doctrine—assumes that the power of raising the dead would prove supernatural power, and that supernatural power would prove the possession of divine truth. Here are two assumptions founded in no logical connection whatever. But if these assumptions were founded in truth,—if the Biblical miracles were done, and if they sufficed to prove supernatural power, and if supernatural power sufficed to prove the possession of supernatural truth

Digitized by Google

communicated by immediate divine revelation, and the ability and disposition to communicate that truth in purity, still this miraculous evidence would be highly objectionable. It brings no light to the mind. It assumes that we can discover the divine in a fact, and not in a proposition. It seeks to govern us through our wonder, and not through our reason. It would have us receive the doctrinal truth as a matter of superstition—without any evidence of its beauty, or fitness or logical coherence between its parts, or of corresponding with other truths previously received by us: it would set up a standard of truth before which the reasoning faculties are powerless, and the door is opened to all the debasing notions which prevailed, or prevail in the priest-ridden communities of ancient Egypt, or modern Hindostan. The attempt to convert a man by miracles, as Emerson says, "is a profanation of the soul": and divinely-commissioned teachers could never resort to it.

CHAPTER XVII.

BIBLICAL PROPHECIES.

> "When men became less credulous, the power of the Pythian Oracle vanished".—CICERO.

§ 95. Akin to the testimony of miracles, and hardly less important among the alleged evidences of Christianity, is that derived from prophecy. The miracles were the strongest proof of the Christian doctrines; but the prophecies were the strongest proof that Jesus was the Messiah. The evangelists represent Jesus as appealing to passages in the Old Testament which, as he said, "testified" of him (*John V.* 39), and on several occasions he made long discourses on this testimony, expounding the things concerning

Digitized by Google

himself in all the Scriptures, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets" (*Luke XXIV.* 25–27). Paul, while teaching at Thessalonica, reasoned with the Jews there for three Sabbath days, alleging from the Scriptures "that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead, and that Jesus" was the Messiah (*Acts XVII.* 3). He used no other argument in attempting to convert them, so far as appears, or, at least, gave little attention to any other. That the prophecies were really considered the main proof of the Messiahship of Jesus by the apostles and evangelists is plain from a vast number of passages in the New Testament; and it is still held to be so by many Christians, though, like miracles, the prophecies have, of late, lost much of their ancient credit. "The greatest proofs of Jesus Christ", says Pascal, "are the prophecies, and thus God foreordained; for the fulfilment of the prophecies is a miracle subsisting from the beginning of the church to the end. * * If one man alone had made a book predicting successfully the time and the manner of the coming of Jesus Christ, the evidence would have been infinite. But in the Bible there is much more. Here is a succession of men for four thousand years, who constantly, without variation, arise one after another, to predict the same event. The announcement is made by an entire people, which subsists for four thousand years to bear testimony to Him, and from that testimony they could not be turned by any threats or persecution."

Before a prophecy be received as of divine origin, it should appear on examination that the prophecy, including the date of the promised fulfilment, was expressed in clear terms; that it was made before the event foretold; that its substance was beyond the discovery of mortal wisdom; and that the special prediction, as well as all others from the same source, was literally fulfilled. There have been pretended prophets in all ages, and in all countries, professing to be possessed of divine knowledge, and teaching very different religious doctrines; and their impostures were maintained by delivering their oracles in ambiguous phrases, which could be interpreted either way to suit the event. Nearly five hundred years before Christ, the Athenians sent to the heathen oracle at Delphi, to learn how they

Digitized by Google

could best resist the great invasions of the Persians, who were approaching. The oracle advised the Athenians to trust in wooden walls. This advice was not explicit, but the Athenians understood it to be a promise that they should succeed by relying upon their navy; and the Greeks were all convinced, by the result of the battle of Salamis, of what, as a nation, they never doubted before, that the oracle of Delphi was possessed of more than human foreknowledge. Grote relates the following instance of ancient prophecy:—"Crœsus sent to inquire of the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, whether he should undertake an expedition against Cyrus. The reply was that if he did, he would subvert a mighty empire. He sent again and enquired whether his empire would be durable. The reply was:—'When a mule shall become king of the Medes then thou must run away.' Crœsus attacked Cyrus, was defeated, made a prisoner, and his kingdom was subjected to the Medes and the Persians. He accused the Oracle with falsehood, but the reply was that 'When the god told him he would subvert a mighty empire, it was his duty to inquire which empire the god meant? and if he neither understood the meaning nor chose to ask for information, he had himself to blame for the result. Besides, Crœsus neglected the warning given to him, about the acquisition of the Median kingdom by a mule. Cyrus was that mule—son of a Median mother, of royal breed, by a Persian father, at once of a different race and of lower position.' This triumphant justification extorted even from Crœsus himself, a full confession that the sin lay with him, and not with the god." One more example of a supposed divine prophecy, (of which thousands could be produced):—Gibbon says that "In a very long discourse on the evidences of the divine authority of the Gospel, which is still extant, Constantine [the emperor who first made Christianity respectable and legal in Rome] dwells with peculiar complacency on the Sibylline verses and the fourth eclogue of Virgil. Forty years before the birth of Christ, the Mantuan bard, as if inspired by the celestial muse of of Isaiah, had celebrated with all the pomp of oriental metaphor the return of the Virgin, the fall of the serpent, the approaching birth of a god-like child, the offspring of the [illegible]t Jupiter, who should expiate the guilt of the human

Digitized by Google

kind, and govern the peaceful universe with the virtues of his father: the rise and appearance of a heavenly race, a primitive nation throughout the world, and the gradual restoration of the innocence and felicity of the golden age. The poet was perhaps unconscious of the secret sense and objects of these sublime predictions, which have been so unworthily applied to the infant son of a consul or a triumvir; but, if a more splendid and indeed specious interpretation of the fourth eclogue contributed to the conversion of the first Christian Emperor, Virgil may deserve to be ranked among the most successful missionaries of the gospel." Such are the records of an infinitely small portion of the fraud and credulity of former times: and the world is not yet too wise to profit by the lesson.

§ 96. *The alleged Messianic prophecies have no reference to Jesus.* I admit that all the passages, claimed as prophetic of him in the Old Testament, were written several hundred years before he was born, and if it appear that they, or any one of them, foretell his coming and character, in a clear and unmistakeable manner, then I shall confess that the evidences of Christianity are not all based on ignorance and superstition. We find that the Evangelists, in their biography of Jesus, frequently, in mentioning some trifling incident, add that this event occurred "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken" by some Old Testament prophet, but when we come to refer to the writings of the latter, we find no prophecy whatever. When the Evangelist discovered that a sentence of his biography bore a resemblance to a sentence in the Old Testament, it appears that he added "that it might be fulfilled." The Jewish pedantry and veneration for their old books was so great that they might be influenced by such arguments, which, if they were not part of the "Word of God," would be beneath notice now. We shall take a glance at the more important of these predictions:—

Matthew says (*I.* 23) "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, saying, behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." The reference is undoubtedly to *Isaiah* (*VII.* 14), "Therefore the Lord

Digitized by Google

himself shall give you a sign: behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." There does appear to be a coincidence there, which, if we admit that Jesus was born of a virgin, is very singular, to say the least. But let us see what Isaiah says in continuation of the above extract: "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. For, before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings." What reference has that to Jesus? We find on examination that Jehovah addressed this language, promising a sign to King Ahaz, when the latter was expecting an attack from the united forces of the kings of Syria and Samaria. The Lord promised that before a child soon to be born should grow to boyhood, these two kings should be overthrown. The child was apparently a son of the prophet, for elsewhere (*VIII.* 3, 4) he says that he had a child, by a prophetess, and Jehovah again promises that before the child shall be able to pronounce the word "father" Samaria and Syria should be spoiled by the Assyrian king. Thus, the first of the boasted prophecies, instead of furnishing evidence of Christ's mission, proves that the inspiration of Matthew did not extend to giving a common-sense interpretation to the Old Testament.

The second appeal to a Messianic prediction (*Mat. II.* 6) refers to a "ruler in Israel" who should come out of Bethlehem, as foretold by Micah (*V.* 2), but the Hebrew prophet says that this ruler should deliver "us from the Assyrians." Jesus was neither a ruler in Israel nor a conqueror of the Assyrians.

Matthew (*II.* 15) finds this third big trump in Hosea (*XI.* 1), who says, "When *Israel* was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." It might be a question whether the writer of Matthew could possibly have claimed this as a prophecy of Christ, under the delusions of superstitious ignorance, free from any consciousness or suspicion of fraud. Hosea is plainly speaking of the Jewish nation alone. Strauss says "Not a little courage was necessary to apply the first part of that sentence to the Jews under Moses, and the latter part to Jesus, but Matthew did it."

Digitized by Google

Matthew (*II.* 17), says that Jeremiah (*XXXI.* 15) in speaking of "Rachel weeping for her children", foretold the weeping of the women of Judea for their children massacred by Herod. The Hebrew priest writes of the sorrows of his people in the Babylonian captivity. He says that Jehovah shall gather Israel (*v.* 10), and promises that the children for whom Rachel (the personification of the Jewish nationality) wept, should "come again from the land of the enemy" (*v.* 16).

Matthew says (*II.* 23) that Christ was a Nazarene, in accordance with prophecy. There is no parallel passage in the Bible. In *Judges* (*XIII.* 7), it is said that Samson "shall be a Nazarite to God", but there is no perceptible connection between Christ and Samson, so far as such a prophecy is concerned.

Matthew (*III.* 2) says, "For this [John the Baptist] is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" This passage is found in *Isaiah* (*XL.* 3), but there is nothing to mark the sentence as peculiarly applicable to any one person, and it might as well be applied to any prophet, or forerunner, of a pretended Messiah, as to John the Baptist. The writer of *Isaiah* meant evidently to "give a joyful exhortation to the Jews on their return from captivity."

Matthew says (*VIII.* 16, 17), that Jesus healed the sick and expelled devils, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness.'" Isaiah says (*LIII.* 4), "Hereby he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." This chapter LIII. of Isaiah is held by the Christians to contain the most remarkable and convincing prophecy in the Bible—a complete description of Jesus. I shall insert the whole chapter here.

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness: and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected by men: a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from

Digitized by Google

him: he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep, before her shearers, is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the trangressions of *my people* was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death: because he had done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail in his soul and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous *servant* justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors: and he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors."

This chapter of *Isaiah* was considered prophetic by the Jews before the time of Jesus, and that it bears some resemblance to the history of the Galilean Messiah, as told by the evangelists, is not to be denied. But before and after this chapter, the Hebrew prophet speaks of Jacob or Israel, and it is reasonable to suppose, if the context will admit the supposition, that his subject is the same in all these chapters, and that he would not change from Jacob to Jesus and from Jesus to Jacob, without some clear intimation. The prophetic strain begins at chapter *XLV.* and continues to chapter *LVII.* Most of the intermediate chapters in the English Bible have headings which speak of "Christ" as the subject of the prophecy, but these headings are modern additions. Now, all these prophetic chapters should be considered together. In chapter *XLIX.* verse 3, the prophet says "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified": "kings shall be thy nursing fathers" (*v.* 23) "and I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their

own blood" (verse 26). Jehovah says unto Zion "Thou art my people" (*LI.* 16), "thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out" (*v.* 17) and "behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury: thou shalt no more drink it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee" (*v.* 22, 23); "put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth, there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (*LII.* 1): "my people went down into Egypt aforetime to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause" (*v.* 4); "the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem" (*v.* 9): the burnt-offerings and the sacrifices of the stranger "shall be accepted upon mine altar" (*LVI.* 7): and so forth. The whole context shows that Israel is the subject whose woes in many captivities have made him meek and humble like a bruised reed; whom the Jehovah would not desert, but would again elevate him to high honor. There is no part of the prophecy which is not quite as applicable to Israel as to Jesus, and many passages are entirely inapplicable to the latter. The applicability of all these Old Testament passages to Jesus, depends also, to some extent, upon the question whether the "throne" which was to remain in the family of David forever was that of a temporal and earthly kingdom, or of a spiritual and celestial dominion. We shall see in a subsequent section (§ 99) that it should be temporal: and this fact established, the prophecies of Jesus are quashed.

"But though he had done so many miracles before him, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias, the prophet, might be fulfilled, which he spake 'Lord who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?' Therefore, they could not believe, because that Esaias said again 'He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart.'" *John XII.* 37–40.

"And he [Jehovah] said [to me, Isaiah] 'Go and tell this people [the Jews] 'Hear ye indeed, but understand not: and see ye indeed, but perceive not.' * * * Then I said 'Lord how long'? And he said 'Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.'" *Is. VI.* 8–13.

Digitized by Google

There is not a word in that chapter of *Isaiah* hinting a prophecy of the Messiah. The whole context indicates a reference to his own times, or to those of the Babylonian captivity. Besides, the idea that Jehovah would prevent men from believing his truth for the sake of having a prophecy fulfilled, is not quite consonant with our notions of what divine justice and mercy should be.

Matthew represents the devil in the scene of the temptation as requesting Jesus to cast himself off the pinnacle of the temple ;—' If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down : for it is written ' He shall give his angels charge concerning thee : and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone' (*Mat. IV.* 6. 7). There is nothing in the *Psalm* from which Satan quoted (*XCI.* 11. 12) to show that it made reference to any especial person ; but Jesus admitted by his reply to Satan that the interpretation of the passage, as a prophecy of him, was correct. The Psalmist spoke of the pious man, who abides "under the shadow of the Almighty", and whom He shall protect from evil. The idea of the devil's appealing to prophecy is not more absurd than that of finding a prophecy of Jesus in this passage.

Bishop Horne, who was too devout to question the existence of a prophetic meaning in the Old Testament passages, referred to by the Evangelists as predictions of Jesus, too sensible not to see that those passages had other meanings, and too honest not to confess it, writes in the following ingenuous manner of some of the New Testament appeals to prophecies of Jesus in the *Psalms :*

"The second *Psalm* presents itself, to all appearance, as an inauguration hymn composed by David, the anointed of Jehovah, when by him, crowned with victory, and placed triumphant on the sacred hill of Zion. But let us turn to the *Acts* (*IV.* 25), and there we find the apostles declaring the *Psalm* to be descriptive [prophetic] of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and of the opposition raised against his Gospel, both by Jew and Gentile.

"In the eighth *Psalm*, we may imagine the writer to be setting forth the preëminence of man in general above the rest of the creation : but by *Hebrews (II.* 6) we learn that the supremacy conferred on the second Adam, the man

Digitized by Google

Christ Jesus, over all things in heaven and earth, is the subject there treated of.

"St. Peter stands up (*Acts II.* 25) and preaches the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the latter part of the sixteenth *Psalm*: and lo, three thousand souls are converted by the sermon. [The sermon of Peter is given entire in the *Acts*, and we have the alleged prophecy in the *Psalms* entire as they had it to whom Peter preached; but if that sermon and that prophecy make any converts now-a-days, it will be, as Brougham says of the effect of Addison's defense of Christianity in a case known to him, just the opposite of that intended. The whole amount of the said prophecy is that the Lord will not leave the Psalmist's "soul in hell", nor suffer his "holy one to see corruption" There is no reference to Jesus: and if there had been, there could have been no fulfilment, unless it were shown that he had risen from the dead; and Peter does not endeavor to show this in his sermon. Any one who believed in the resurrection of Jesus, must have been a Christian without any farther conversion: he who did not believe it, would not, after having lived in Jerusalem during the whole ministry of Christ, have been converted by the pedantic assumptions of Peter].

"Of the eighteenth *Psalm*, we are told in the course of the sacred history (2. *S. XXII.*), that 'David spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hands of his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul;' yet in *Romans* (*XV.* 9), the ninth verse of that Psalm, is adduced as proof that the Gentiles should glorify God for his mercy in Christ Jesus: 'As it is written, 'For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles and sing unto thy name.'

"In the nineteenth *Psalm*, David seems to be speaking of the material heavens and their operations only, when he says 'Their sound is gone forth unto all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.' But St. Paul (*Rom. X.* 18), quotes the passage to show that [this was a prophecy and had been fulfilled in the fact that] the Gospel had been universally published by the Apostles.

"Jesus appropriated the twenty-second *Psalm* to himself by beginning it in the midst of his sufferings on the

Digitized by Google

cross: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and the words of the eighth verse were actually used by the chief priests, when they reviled him, 'He trusted in God,' &c., *Mat. XXVII.* 43.

"When David says, in the fortieth *Psalm*, 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; so I am come to do thy will:' we might suppose him only to declare in his own person that obedience is better than sacrifice; but from *Hebrews* (*X.* 5), we learn that the Messiah speaks, in that place, of his advent in the flesh to abolish the legal sacrifices, and to do away with sin, by the oblation, once for all.

"That tender and pathetic complaint in the forty-first *Psalm*,—'Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me'—undoubtedly might be, and probably was, originally uttered by David, upon the revolt of his old friend and counsellor, Ahithophel, to the party of his rebellious son Absalom. But we are certain, from *John* (*XIII.* 18), that this Scripture was fulfilled when Christ was betrayed by his apostate disciple: 'I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.'

"The sixty-eighth *Psalm*, though apparently conversant about Israelitish victories, the translation of the Ark to Zion, and the services of the Tabernacle; yet does, under those figures, treat of Christ's resurrection; his going up on high, leading captivity captive, pouring out the gifts of the spirit, erecting his Church in the world, and enlarging it by the accession of the nations to the faith; as will be evident to any one who considers the force and consequence of the apostle's citation from it (*Eph. IV.* 7, 8); 'unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.'

"St. Matthew (*XII.* 35), informing us that Jesus spake to the multitude in parables, gives it as one [the only] reason why he did so, 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet (*Ps. LXXIII.* 2), 'I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.'" Adam Clarke says that many of these quota-

Digitized by Google

tions from the Old Testament "are accommodated" to the New Testament story, "their own historical meaning being different, may be innocently credited; but let it always be remembered, that these accommodations are made by the same Spirit by which the *Psalms* were originally given; that this Spirit has a right to extend its own meaning, and to adapt his own words to subjects, transactions, and times, to which, from similarity of circumstances, they may be applicable. Many passages of the Old Testament seem to be thus quoted [as predictions] in the New. And, often, the words a little *altered*, and the meaning *extended*, to make them suitable to existing circumstances" [the later fables].

It appears to me that Dr. Clarke, in this defense of those passages in which the Evangelists appear, to our corrupt reason, to place an arbitrary and absurd meaning upon portions of the Old Testament, does not take so strong a position as he might. For by this mode of reasoning, it is required that the student should believe beforehand that Jehovah wrote both the Old and New Testament, whereas some persons might seek for proof of such a theory and in the search might stumble on those very alleged prophecies, and thereby be led to doubt. Besides, by his method of defense, Mohammed and Jo Smith might be proved to be the Messiah just as well as Jesus. The only proper and safe position for a friend of the Bible to take is, that God made common sense, and is the absolute proprietor of it; and, since he has a right to do what he will with his own, he might permit his inspired prophets and evangelists to dispense with the use of it, whenever they saw fit, and no man could have any right to complain.

The errors of the New Testament writers in the allusions to the alleged prophecies, are so evident, that the Church has been sorely troubled to get over them. About a century ago, Whiston, an ardent believer, and the successor of Sir Isaac Newton in his mathematical professorship, published a book to prove that the Jews, during the early ages of the Christian Church, had fraudulently altered the passages of the Old Testament referred to as prophecies of Christ, by the Evangelists. The skeptics replied, that if such were the fact, the Old Testament was not reliable on any point. Whiston's theory was widely received as correct, until a

Digitized by Google

comparison of all the ancient copies of the Jewish Scriptures showed them to be all alike in the alleged predictions. Another theory was that the Old Testament passages referred to had two meanings—one historical and the other prophetic. This appears to have been the mode in which Dr. Arnold sought to escape from the difficulties of the case. He says "We find, throughout the New Testament, references made to various passages in the Old Testament which are alleged as prophetic of Christ, or of some particulars of the Christian dispensation. Now, if we turn to the context of these passages, and so endeavor to discover their meaning, according to the only sound principles of interpretation, it will often appear that they do not relate to the Messiah, or to Christian times, but are either expressions of religious affections generally, such as submission, love, hope, etc., or else refer to some particular circumstances in the life and condition of the writer, or of the Jewish nation, and do not at all show that any thing more remote, or any events of a more universal and spiritual character were designed to be prophesied." And again he says "Every prophecy, as uttered by man (that is by an intelligent, and not a mere mechanical instrument), and at the same time as inspired by God, must, as far as appears, have a double sense: one, the sense entertained by the human mind of the writer; the other, the sense infused into it by God. * * We may even suppose the prophet to be totally ignorant of the divine meaning of his words, and to intend to express a meaning of his own quite unlike God's meaning." It is an evidence that Biblical prophecy has got into a very tight place, when the most learned and able defenders of it begin to admit that the prophets did not know their own meaning. If Isaiah did not know his own meaning, what security have we that any body else did, or does? Palfrey meets the difficulty boldly, confesses that "the New Testament writers did sometimes [!] interpret the Old Testament erroneously," and makes the judicious observation that "the theory of a double sense" is "justly liable to the charge of violating all the principles of language, and being in fact the theory of no definite sense whatever."

The Christians cannot lay "their finger * on a single

* THEODORE PARKER.

Digitized by Google

Old Testament prediction clearly referring to Jesus Christ, intended by the utterer of it to relate to him, prefiguring his character and career, and manifestly fulfilled in his appearance on earth. This they cannot do. Most of the passages usually adduced as complying with these conditions, referred, and were clearly intended to refer, to eminent individuals in Israelitish history: many are not prophecies at all. The Messiah, the anointed deliverer, expected by the Jews, hoped for and called for by their poets and prophets, was of a character so different and a career so opposite, to those of the meek, lowly, long-suffering Jesus, that the passages describing the one never could have been applied to the other without a perversion of ingenuity, and a disloyal treatment of their obvious signification, which, if employed in any other field than that of theology, would have met with the prompt discredit and derision they deserve. This disingenuousness is obvious in one point especially: the Messianic prophecies are interpreted *literally* or *figuratively*, as may best suit their adaptation to the received history of Jesus. Thus that 'the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the lion eat grass like an ox', is taken figuratively: that 'the Messiah should ride into Jerusalem' [on two asses] is taken literally."

There are a great many clear predictions in the Old Testament, of a royal Messiah, of which the Evangelists make no mention. They attach great importance to the prediction that the Messiah was to be of the house of David, and they endeavor to show that, in this respect, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy. But they fail entirely in this endeavor. They show the genealogy of Joseph, none of whose blood ran in veins of the Galilean reformer. The Davidical blood of Joseph is frequently asserted—that of Mary never. The angel said to Joseph, "thou son of David" (*Mat. I.* 20): and Luke says Jesus was born of "a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David" (*Luke I.* 27). This language implies that Mary was not of the house of David. All the repeated assertions about the royal blood of Joseph are not only without interest as concerns Jesus, but they are really absurd—mere nonsense—impertinent stuff.

§ 97. The eighth chapter of *Daniel* is reputed to con-

Digitized by Google

tain some of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible. Hennell says, it gives "an account of a vision of a ram with two horns, which was smitten by a he-goat having a notable horn between his eyes, which horn being broken, four other notable horns came up toward the four winds of heaven. The chapter itself informs us that by this was meant the conquest of the kings or kingdoms of Media and Persia, by the king of Grecia; the first great horn being the first king, viz.: Alexander the Great, and the four notable horns after him, four kingdoms, which shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power, *i. e.*, plainly the four Macedonian monarchies of Thrace, Macedon, Syria, and Egypt. So far this vision is clear, and commentators agree. But Daniel sees coming out of the four notable horns a little horn, which plays a very conspicuous part, and to determine who the little horn is, forms the great problem of the book of *Daniel*. Josephus understood it to mean Antiochus Epiphanes; according to Jerome, it was Antiochus as a type of Anti-Christ. Sir Isaac Newton thought it meant the Romans. Bishop Newton thought it meant first the Romans and afterwards the popes." Many biblical critics, including Arnold and Neander, believe that a portion of the book was written after the time of Alexander.

§ 98. The only book in the Bible making pretensions to be purely prophetic, is *Revelations*, and it is the most obscure portion of the Sacred Scripture. No interpretation has ever been offered that could find acceptation among any large portion of the Christian church. Nearly every prominent commentator on the Bible has had his own theory of the meaning of the *Apocalypse*, and these theories have been in many cases most inconsistent with each other. Alexander says that the book is "deeply mysterious",—that is to say, nobody knows what it means. Milman candidly confesses "it is to be feared that a history of the interpretation of the *Apocalypse* would not give a very favorable view either of the wisdom or of the charity of the successive ages of Christianity." Sir Isaac Newton, a very devout Christian, acknowledges that there are no true prophecies in the Bible, when he says, "God gave these [*Revelations*] and the prophecies of the Old Testament,

Digitized by Google

not to satisfy men's curiosity by enabling them to foreknow things, but, that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event; and His prescience, not that of the interpreter, be then manifested thereby to the world." Sir Isaac thus admits that the biblical prophecies furnish no evidence of the truth of the Scriptures or of the Messiahship of Jesus: for a prophecy, which does not enable men "to foreknow things" but which is to be interpreted by "the event" is a pitiful affair, in no way superior to the predictions of the heathen oracles.

§ 99. *The Bible contains many false prophecies.* Many of its predictions never were, and never can be fulfilled. If this fact be established, we must refuse to receive the Bible as a divine revelation: for such a revelation never could contain false prophecies.

One of the most glaring of these false prophecies, is that of the perpetuity of the temporal throne of Israel in the family of David. Proof that such a prophecy is contained and frequently repeated in the Old Testament, will not only show the fallibility of the book, but will also show the falsehood of the claim of the Apostles and the Evangelists, that Jesus was the Messiah, and that this prophecy was fulfilled by the perpetuity of his church. Luke (*I.* 32, 33) and Peter (*Acts II.* 30) assert that the throne, which was to remain in the family of David forever, was a spiritual throne, and that Christ, as the head of the Church, will occupy that throne to all eternity, and thus fulfil the prophecy. Let us see whether the Old Testament texts will permit us to understand the prophecy as meaning a spiritual throne.

"He [Solomon] shall build me [Jehovah] an house, and I will establish his *throne* forever." 1 *Ch. XVII.* 12.

"I will settle him in mine house and in mine kingdom forever: and his *throne* shall be established for evermore." 1 *Ch. XVII.* 14.

"The Lord God of Israel chose me [David] before all the house of my father to be *king* over Israel forever." 1 *Ch. XXVIII.* 4.

"Once I have sworn by my holiness, that I will not *lie* unto David. His *seed* shall endure forever, and his *throne* as the sun before me." *Ps. LXXXIX.* 35. 36.

"Therefore, now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David, my father, that thou promisedst him, saying 'There shall

Digitized by Google

not fail thee a *man* in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel.'" 1 *K. VIII.* 25.

"My mercy shall not depart away from him [Solomon] as I took it away from Saul, whom I put away before thee [David]. And thy *house*, and thy *kingdom* shall be established forever." 2 *S. VII.* 14–16.

Several pages of such stuff might be quoted ; but it is enough. The "kingdom", the "throne, the "house", the "seed" of David should be established, and he should never want a "man" to represent his family ; his descendants should be kings "over Israel" forever. These passages spoken by inspiration, concerning a usurping monarch and his son and successor, could not be understood otherwise than as promising the temporal throne of that nation to their descendants forever : and there is nothing in these passages, or in any other, to imply the promise of any other than a temporal throne. And yet, the Christian priests have been so disingenuous and shameless as to assert for eighteen centuries that the Old Testament writers meant by these passages to prophesy the eternal dominion, not of David's mortal descendants over the nation of Jews, but of Jesus Christ over the universal church. In the verse last quoted, we see that Jehovah would not withdraw his mercy from the house of David, as he withdrew it from Saul, who was dethroned. The unmistakeable meaning of this passage is that David's sons should hold that temporal throne forever. That the ancient Jews understood these texts to foretell the perpetuity of the temporal throne, is a notorious fact : and accordingly, they expected the Messiah to be a temporal ruler. We find this interpretation given in the Old Testament itself, with evident approval, as the correct one. When the ten tribes, four-fifths of the nation, revolted, and chose Jeroboam for their king, Abijah, the grandson of Solomon, appealed to the rebellious Israelites to return to their obedience, because "the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, even to David, and to his sons" (2 *Ch. XIII.* 5). Again, at a later day, when Athaliah usurped the throne, Jehoiada, the high priest, a person mentioned with great respect by the sacred record, headed a revolt against her, and established Joash, the legitimate Davidical heir of the throne, in his hereditary

Digitized by Google

rights. In organizing the revolt, Jehoiada delivered a speech to his friends, declaring "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David" (2 *Ch.* *XXIII.* 3). Again, we read that Jehoram, the descendant of David and king of Judah, was very wicked and idolatrous, and Jehovah was greatly incensed against him. "Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David" (2 *Ch.* *XXI.* 7): that is, he would permit the Davidical dynasty to retain the throne, but it was only on account of his promise to their ancestor.

I have already shown that the prophets foretold the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, with all its rites (§ 67): and while this law should continue in force, there was no room for such a Messiah as Jesus proved to be. When we turn to the true Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, we find that the Messiah was evidently to be a temporal king, Jerusalem should recover its glory, the worship in the temple should be reëstablished in its former splendor, and the Levites should continue their ministrations. Thus, Zechariah says (*XII.* 16) "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up, from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of the Tabernacles." Consider also the following from Jeremiah:

"'Behold, the days will come', saith the Lord, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness [the Messiah] to grow up unto David: *and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.* In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, 'The Lord our Righteousness'. 'For thus', saith the Lord, 'David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel: neither shall the priests, the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and do sacrifices continually. * * * Thus, saith the Lord, if ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne, and with the Levites, my priests, my ministers.'" *Jer.* *XXXIII.* 14–18. 20. 21.

"I will make them [the two nations of Judah and Israel] one

Digitized by Google

nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; and they shall no more be two nations. * * * so shall they be my people, and I will be *their* God. And David, my servant, shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: and they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob, my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children forever: and my servant, David, shall be their prince forever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore.". *Ezek. XXXVII.* 22-26.

"It is trifling" says F. W. Newman "to pretend that the land promised to Jacob and in which the old Jews dwelt, was a spiritual, and not the literal Palestine; and therefore it is impossible to make out that Jesus has fulfilled any part of this representation. The description that follows [in *Ezekiel XL*, etc.] of the new city and temple with the sacrifices offered 'by the priests, the Levites, of the seed of Zadok,' and the gate of the sanctuary for the prince [*XLIV*. 3] and his elaborate account of the borders of the land (*XLVIII.* 13-23) place the earnestness of Ezekiel's literalism in still clearer light."

"It * has never been shown that there is, in the whole of the Old Testament, one single sentence that in the plain and natural sense of the words, foretells the birth, life or death of Jesus of Nazareth. If the scriptures have seventy-two senses, as one of the Rabbins declares, or if it foretells whatever comes to pass, as Augustine says, and means all it can be made to mean, as many modern seem to think, why predictions and types of Jesus may be found in the first chapter of *Genesis*, in Noah and Abraham, and Samson, as well as in Virgil's fourth Eclogue, the Odes of Horace, and the story of the Trihemerine Hercules.

"The Messianic expectations and prophecies seem to have originated in this way; after the happy and successful periods of David and Solomon, the kingdom was divided into Judah and Israel, the two tribes and the ten, and the national prosperity declined. Pious men hoped for better times; they naturally connected these hopes with a per-

* THEODORE PARKER.

Digitized by Google

sonal deliverer,—a descendant of David their most popular king. The deliverer would unite the two kingdoms under the old form. A poetic fancy endowed him with wonderful powers, made him a model of goodness. Different poets arrayed their expected hero in imaginary drapery to suit their own conceptions. Malachi gives him a forerunner. The Jews were the devoutest of nations; the popular deliverer must be a religious man. They were full of pious faith; so the darker the present, the brighter shone the Pharos of Hope in the future. Sometimes this deliverer was called the Messiah; this term is not common in the Old Testament, however, but is sometimes applied to Cyrus by the Pseudo-Isaiah.

"These hopes and predictions of a deliverer, involved many important things—a reünion of the divided tribes—a return of the exile—the triumph and extension of the kingdom of Israel—its eternal duration and perfect happiness. Idolatry was to be rooted out; the nations improved in morals and religion: Truth and Righteousness were to reign; Jehovah was to be reconciled with his people; all of them were to be taught of God: and other nations were to come up to Jerusalem and be blessed. But the Mosaic law was to be eternal: the old ritual war to last forever: Jerusalem was to be the capital of the Messianic kingdom, and the Jewish nation to be reëstablished in greater pomp than in the times of David. Are these predictions of Jesus of Nazareth? He was not the Messiah of Jewish expectation —of the prophets foretelling. The farthest from it possible. The predictions demanded a political and visible kingdom in Palestine, with Jerusalem for its capital, and the old law for its ritual. The kingdom of Jesus is not of this world. The ten tribes—have they come back to the home of their fathers? They have perished and are swallowed up in the tide of the nations, no one knowing the place of their burial. The kingdom of the two tribes soon went to the ground. These are notorious facts. The Jews are right when they say *their* predicted Messiah has not come. Does the Old Testament foretell a suffering savior, his kingdom not of this world—crucified—raised from the dead? The idea is foreign to the Hebrew Scriptures."

Digitized by Google

The most notable prophecy of the New Testament is that of the second coming of Christ, before the end of the generation in which the apostles lived. The prediction is as clear as language can make it ; it was published by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude ; and is referred to in more than a score of texts :

"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. * * Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." *Jesus in Matthew, XXIV.* 30, 31, 34.

"Verily, I say unto you there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." *Jesus in Mat., XVI.* 28.

"The stars of heaven shall fall and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken, and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. * * Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done." *Jesus in Mark, X.* 25–30.

"Know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." *Jesus in Luke, XXI.* 31, 32.

"If I will that he [John] tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?" *Jesus in John, XXI.* 22.

"This we say unto you *by the word of the Lord* that we, which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Son in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1. *Thess. VI.* 15–18.

"Now all these things happened unto them for examples ; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1. *Cor. X.* 11.

"The Lord is at hand." *Philip, IV.* 5.

"The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." *James, V.* 8

"Little children, it is the last time : and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists : whereby we know that it is the last time." 1. *John, II.* 18.

"The end of all things is at hand." 1. *Pet. IV.* 7.

Digitized by Google

These quotations justify me in saying that Christ's prediction of his second advent in the time of the apostles is as clear as language can make it ; and the meaning of these passages is not contradicted, or qualified in any noteworthy respect, by any other texts in the New Testament. The author of the *second epistle of Peter* (*III.* 3–13), who wrote at a later date, refers to the scoffers, who asked why this prediction was not fulfilled :—"Where is the promise of his coming?" And he goes on to say, "But beloved be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It was left for Gibbon to add—"The revolution of eighteen centuries has instructed us not to press too closely the mysterious language of prophecy and revelation."

We will not now turn to the minor abortions of inspired prophecy.

"I [Jehovah] will give to thee [Abram] and to thy seed after thee the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession." *Gen. XVII.* 8, *XIII.* 15.

"The Lord God of Israel hath given rest unto his people that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever." 1 *Ch. XXIII.* 25.

"The Lord hath chosen Zion ; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever." *Ps. CXXXII.* 14.

"For now I have chosen and sanctified this house [Solomon's Temple], that my name may be there forever ; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." 2. *Ch. VII.* 16.

"Them [the Levites] hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God and to minister unto him forever." 1. *Ch. XV.* 2.

"Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap." *Is. XVII.* 1.

"I [Jehovah] will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish ; he wipeth it and turneth it upside down." 2. *K. XXI.* 13.

"I [Jehovah] will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities, among the cities that are laid waste, shall be desolate forty years ; and I will scatter the Egyptians among nations and will disperse them through the countries." *Ezek. XXIX.* 10–12.

"Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. * It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from gener-

Digitized by Google

ation to generation * * her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." *Is. XIII.* 19–22.

"I will also destroy the idols, * * and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt." *Ezek. XXX.* 13.

Babylon was a great city for several centuries after the time of Isaiah, and it was an important place in the beginning of the Christian era. There were princes in Egypt for three hundred years after the time of Ezekiel, and the ancient idol-worship was maintained under the Roman dominion.

"Ezekiel (*XXIX.*) predicted* that Nebuchadnezzar should destroy Tyre. The prediction is clear and distinct; the destruction was to be complete and total. 'With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrison shall go down to the ground. * * I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built up no more.' But it was not so, Nebuchadnezzar was obliged to raise the siege after investing the city for thirteen years, and go and fight the Egyptians. Then, sixteen years after the first oracle, Ezekiel takes back his own words, 'The word of the Lord came unto me 'saying 'Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar * * caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every head was made bald' with the chafing of the helmet, 'every shoulder was peeled' with the pressure of burthens; yet he had no wages, nor his army from Tyrus. * * Therefore, behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar.'" Tyre was a place of importance in the time of the Crusades, 1800 years after Ezekiel.

"Thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim * * He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem" (*Jer. XXII.* 18. 19.). "Thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim, king of Judah 'He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost" (*Jer. XXXVI.* 30).

"So Jehoiakin slept with his fathers [died in peace, and was buried in the royal tombs]: and Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his stead." 2. *K. XXIV.* 6.

Jeremiah, writing the word of the Lord of Hosts,

* THEODORE PARKER.

Digitized by Google

threatened destruction to the Jews who should remain in Egypt, whither they had fled at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. The prophet's purpose was probably to induce them by fright to return to Jerusalem. He said that the remnant of Judah, who had set their faces to go into the land of Egypt, "should all be consumed" by the sword, and by famine, and by pestilence, and "none shall escape or remain. Therefore" says he "hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt: behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, 'that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt, saying 'The Lord God liveth'" (*Jer. XLIV.* 12–14). Yet there were Jews in Egypt who adhered to the faith of their fathers as late as the Christian era, and still later—the descendants of those who went thither at the time of the captivity.

In the book of *Isaiah* (*XIX.*) there is a prophecy, that the time should come when the Egyptians should war with each other, when five cities of Egypt should speak the language of Canaan, when Jehovah should have an altar in the centre of Egypt, when the Egyptians should cry unto him, when he should send them a Savior, when they should sacrifice to him, when the Assyrians should go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria and the Egyptians should serve with the Assyrians, when Israel should be third with Egypt and with Assyria; "Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance." The fulfilment of this prophecy is indefinitely postponed.

Frequent appeal is made by Christian writers to the Hebrew prophecies of the captivity of Israel, and the still more remarkable dispersion of that people which, scattered as it is, throughout the world yet preserves its nationality, and clings with unexampled pertinacity to its religion. The predictions of the dispersion are to be found in numerous books; but I shall refer here only to *Deuteronomy* (*XXVIII*), than which there is, I believe, none more striking. Moses says that, "if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord, thy God," "thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whether the Lord shall lead thee:" "and the Lord shall

Digitized by Google

scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other:" "and among these nations shalt thou find no ease" etc. (*Deut.* *XXVIII.* 15. 37. 64. 65). These predictions appear at first sight to have been singularly fulfilled; but they are only a few out of a very long list, many of which are not fulfilled; predictions such as that "The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart"(*v.* 28): "The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed" (*v.* 24) etc. The prediction of the dispersion is ordinarily interpreted to foretell the present condition of the Jews. But it was probably written after the event to mean the dispersion of the Jews after their conquest [599 B. C.] by the king of Babylon. But whether written before or after that event, whether intended to foretell that dispersion, or the present one, it lacks the character of a true prophecy, for the want of a specification of the time when. It may safely be predicted of England that her metropolis shall be a deserted ruin, and her people dispersed to all lands, and the land shall be spoiled by foreigners; but that time will not probably come for thousands, perhaps not for tens of thousands of years, and until it does come, the friends of the prophecy would only have to say that the time for the fulfilment had not arrived. That the dispersion predicted was that of the Babylonian captivity, is evident from predictions made after that event, that the people of Judah should no more be dispersed, that the kingdom and the capital should recover their glory, etc. The prophecy of the dispersion of a nation would be much more strange now than it was twenty-five hundred years ago, when wars in Western Asia frequently resulted in the enslavement of a whole people, and their deportation to the land of the conquerors.

"Thus saith thy Lord, the Lord, and thy God, that pleadest the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again." *Is.* *LI.* 22.

"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion! put on thy beautiful garments. O! Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth, there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." *Is.* *LII.* 1.

"And they shall bring all your brethren for our offering unto

Digitized by Google

the Lord, out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord, and I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." *Is. L.* 20–22.

"Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people" *Is. LVI.* 6. 7.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

The intoxication of credulity is the witness of the spirit.

§ 100. Believers in the Bible say that they have conclusive proof of the truth of their faith in the witness of the spirit—a peculiar exhiliration or confidence which they feel at times in regard to their religion. That is to say, when thinking of Jehovah, they are conscious of a superstitious awe, as children are scared when threatened by the nurse with the raw-head and bloody-bones ; or they think of going to heaven with so much assurance that they enjoy part of the pleasure beforehand. Macaulay, in his Review of *Ranke's History of the Popes*, speaking of the peculiar mental excitement or enthusiasm, known as "the witness of the spirit," says "It not unfrequently happens that a tinker or coal-heaver hears a sermon, or falls in with a tract, which alarms him about the state of his soul. If he be a man of excitable nerves and strong imagination, he thinks himself given over to the evil power. He doubts whether

Digitized by Google

he has not committed the unpardonable sin. He imputes every wild fancy that springs up in his mind to the whisper of a fiend. His sleep is broken by dreams of the great judgment-seat, the open books, and the unquenchable fire. If, in order to escape from these vexing thoughts, he flies to amusement or to licentious indulgence, the delusive relief only makes his misery darker and more hopeless. At length, a turn takes place. He is reconciled to his offended maker. To borrow the fine imagery of one who had himself been thus tried, he emerges from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, from the dark land of gins and snares, of quagmires and precipices, of evil spirits and ravenous beasts. The sunshine is on his path. He ascends the Delectable Mountains, and catches from their summit a distant view of the shining city which is the end of his pilgrimage." And that man has the witness of the spirit. Such is the sum and substance of this weighty evidence, which is confidently appealed to in favor of all creeds wherein a heaven and hell contribute to raise the hopes and excite the fears of the superstitious and the ignorant. This witness of the spirit is supposed to be particularly strong with all martyrs; but if this testimony suffice for proof, all religious creeds, extensively received, must be true. All have martyrs, each equally convinced of the truth of his peculiar creed by the witness of his spirit. Locke * says "A strong and firm persuasion of any proposition relating to religion, for which a man hath either no or not sufficient proofs from *reason*, but receives them as truth wrought in the mind by extraordinary influence coming [supposed to come] immediately from God himself, seems to me to be enthusiasm which can be no evidence or ground of assurance at all, nor can, by any means, be taken for knowledge. If such groundless thoughts as these concerning ordinary matters and not religion, possess the mind strongly, we call it raving, and every one thinks it a degree of madness; in religion, men accustomed to the thoughts of revelation make a greater allowance to it, though, indeed, it be a more dangerous madness; but men are apt to think in religion they may, or ought to quit their reason. I find that the Christians, Mohammedans, and Brahmins all pretend to this immediate inspira-

* As quoted in King's Life of Locke.

Digitized by Google

tion; but it is certain that contradictions and falsehoods cannot come from God; nor can any one that is of the true religion, be assured of anything by a way whereof those of a false religion may be and are equally confirmed in theirs. For the Turkish Dervishes pretend to revelations, ecstasies, visions, raptures, to be transported with the illumination of God, etc. The Jangis [Jaunas?] among the Hindoos talk of being illuminated and entirely united to God, as well as the most spiritualized Christians.

"It is to be observed concerning these illuminations, that how clear soever they may seem, they carry no knowledge nor certainty any farther than there are proofs of the truth of those things that are discovered by them; and so far they are parts of reason, and have the same foundation with the other persuasions in a man's mind, whereof his reason judges. If there be no proofs of them, they pass for nothing but mere imaginations of fancy, how clearly soever they appear, or acceptable they may be to the mind. For it is not the clearness of the fancy, but the evidence of the truth of a thing, which makes the certainty. He that should pretend to have a clear sight of a Turkish paradise, and of an angel sent to direct him thither, might, perhaps, have a very clear imagination of all this; but it altogether no more proved that either there were such a place, or that an angel had the conduct of him thither, than if he saw all this in colors, well drawn by a painter; these two pictures being no more different as to the appearance of anything resembled by them, than that one is a fleeting draught in the imagination, the other a lasting one on a sensible body."

That kind of religious conviction, which is called the witness of the spirit, is far more abundant among the Mohammedans, and many heathen sects, than among the Christians. The power of this testimony to the truth of a religion depends upon the enthusiastic disposition of the individual and his ignorance of the evidence against his creed. Several centuries ago, the witness of the spirit was felt in nearly every Christian family, but the progress of enlightenment and skepticism has been so great, that the reason has been set comparatively free, and a philosophical indifference has taken the place of the fervent faith of the

Digitized by Google

earlier ages. F. W. Newman relates in his *Phases of Faith*, that in Aleppo, whither he had gone as a Christian missionary, a Mohammedan carpenter spoke to him as follows:—"I will tell you, sir, how the case stands. God has given you English a great many good gifts. You make fine ships and sharp penknives, and good cloth and cottons: and you have rich nobles and brave soldiers; and you write and print many learned books; all this is of God. But there is one thing that God has withheld from you, and has revealed to us—and that is the knowledge of the true religion, by which one may be saved."

The deep devoutness of many of the Mohammedan prayers shows the possession of the witness of the spirit, in a very high degree for their form of faith,—the following for example: "O Thou * who beholdest my state, and who knowest that, of necessity, I cannot do otherwise than be content with it—Thou from whom there is neither refuge nor defense, let not thy power and greatness suffer that he, whom Thou protectest, should perish. But if it be thy pleasure that he should perish, behold me ready for whatever Thou mayst appoint. Every chastisement which cometh from Thee, shall be sweet to me, excepting separation from Thee." Carlyle demands—"Will you ever be calling heathenism a lie, worthy of damnation, which leads its devotee to consecrate all upon its altars, and with a wonder, which transcends all your logic, bows before some idol of nature: while those who with sleepy heads and lifeless spirits meet in a framed house, and go over a different set of forms, are the only elect of God? Clear thy mind of cant! Does not God look at the heart?"

* Quoted by the author of an "Essay on Intuitive Morals."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

"If He has spoken why is not
the Universe convinced?"

§ 101. Most of the books on the Evidences for Christianity, have a chapter occupied with an argument that the spread of that religion cannot be accounted for by natural causes, and must therefore have been owing to the miraculous aid of Providence. The Christians call attention to the fact, that the founder of their religion was an individual who had no advantages of birth, wealth, learning, political power or influential friends: that his associates in the labor of teaching his doctrines were men as ignorant, and poor as himself; that they belonged to a nation which was generally despised: and that, yet notwithstanding all these disadvantages in their position, within three centuries, their doctrine was the established religion of the Roman Empire, and is now the religion of all enlightened nations. In making this argument, the Christians ask our particular attention to the manner in which Islamism was propagated. Mohammed was a wealthy man, and after having gained a few converts, he became a military leader, and by great ability as a general, made extensive conquests, and compelled his subjects to adopt his religion. By these means, and by these only, he succeeded in establishing a Church, which was once more numerous, though now less so, than the Church of Jesus. Christianity, say they, owes nothing to the sword, or to political influence: it has gained all its converts by appeals to the reason and the feelings of men.

Such is the substance of the argument for the divine origin of the Bible, from the spread of its doctrines; but, although much importance was formerly attached to this branch of the evidences of Christianity, we shall probably conclude, on a fair consideration of the facts, that the Bible has gained its dominion in the same way as many other books claiming to be revelations from heaven.

Digitized by Google

The subjection of all the countries bordering on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea by Alexander, and the subsequent union of the whole known world under the dominion of the Roman Emperors, had caused a great amount of friendly intercourse between peoples which had previously always been hostile to each other. It was a necessary consequence of this intercourse that old prejudices should disappear, and comparatively enlightened and liberal opinions should gain a footing. The Babylonian, the Phœnician, the Jew, the Egyptian, and the Greek, by intercourse with his fellow-subjects, discovered that they were not so bad as they had been represented, but that all were good in their way, and that each had some merit, in which he was inferior to none of the others. To aid the levelling influences of this free intercourse, the Grecian philosophy came with its grand conceptions, sublime eloquence, enchanting poetry, valuable information, and anti-ecclesiastical tone. A skeptical disposition, a tendency to reject the ancient mythology, had become prevalent among the leading Athenians as early as the Peloponnesian War, and in the time of Alexander it had spread to the lower classes, and more particularly, in the armies which conquered and occupied the Asiatic provinces of his empire. Many of these men, disbelieving the religion of their own nation, could not believe that of any other ; but they were disposed to adopt a tone of toleration, which gained the confidence of the conquered, who soon began to catch a taint of the skepticism of their masters. But it was chiefly among the Greeks and Romans that Christianity gained its first foothold ; and its main struggle was with their ancient creed. "In the various systems of Polytheism,* some wandering fanatics of Egypt and Syria, who addressed themselves to the credulous superstition of the populace, were, perhaps, the only order of priests that derived their whole support and credit from their sacerdotal profession, and were very deeply affected by a personal concern for the safety or prosperity of their tutelar deities. The ministers of Polytheism, both in Rome and in the provinces, were, for the most part, men of noble birth and of an affluent fortune, who received, as an honorable distinction, the care of a celebrated temple, or of

* GIBBON, Decline and Fall. Ch. XV.

Digitized by Google

a public sacrifice, exhibited very frequently, at their own expense, the sacred games, and, with cold indifference, performed the ancient rites, according to the laws and fashion of their country. As they were engaged in the ordinary occupations of life, their zeal and devotion were seldom animated by a sense of interest, or by the habits of an ecclesiastical character. Confined to their own respective temples and cities, they remained without any connection of discipline or government; and whilst they acknowledged the supreme jurisdiction of the Senate, of the College of the pontiffs, and of the Emperor, those civil magistrates contented themselves with the easy task of maintaining in peace and dignity the general worship of mankind. The religious sentiments of the Polytheists were very loose and uncertain. They were abandoned, almost without control, to the natural workings of a superstitious fancy. The accidental circumstances of their life and situation determined the object as well as the degree of their devotion ; and as long as their adoration was successively prostituted to a thousand deities, it was scarcely possible that their hearts could be susceptible of a very sincere or lively passion for any of them.

" When Christianity appeared in the world, even these faint and imperfect impressions had lost much of their original power. Human reason, which, by its unassisted strength, is incapable of perceiving the mysteries of faith, had already obtained an easy triumph over the folly of Paganism ; and when Tertullian or Lactantius employed their labors in exposing its follies or extravagance, they had only to transcribe the eloquence of Cicero, or the wit of Lucian. The contagion of these skeptical writings had been diffused far beyond the number of their readers. The fashion of incredulity was communicated from the philosopher to the man of pleasure or business, from the noble to the plebeian, and from the master to the menial slave who waited at his table, and who eagerly listened to the freedom of his conversation. On public occasions, the philosophic portion of mankind affected to treat with respect and decency the religious institutions of their country ; but their secret con tempt penetrated through the thin and awkward disguise, and even the people, when they discovered that their deities were rejected and derided by those whose rank or under-

Digitized by Google

standing they were accustomed to reverence, were filled with doubts and apprehensions concerning the truth of those doctrines, to which they had yielded the most implicit belief. The decline of ancient prejudice exposed a very numerous portion of the human kind to the danger of a painful and comfortless situation. A state of skepticism and suspense may amuse a few inquisitive minds. But the practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude, that if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision. Their love of the marvellous and supernatural, their curiosity with regard to future events, and their strong propensity to extend their hopes and fears beyond the limits of the visible world, were the principal causes which favored the establishment of Polytheism. So urgent on the vulgar is the necessity of believing, that the fall of any system of mythology will most probably be succeeded by the introduction of some other mode of superstition. Some deities, of a more recent and fashionable cast, might soon have occupied the deserted temples of Jupiter and Apollo, if, in the decisive moment, the wisdom of Providence had not interposed a genuine revelation," whose superiority to the worn-out system was perceptible to the most ignorant. Those who are inclined to pursue this reflection, instead of viewing with astonishment the rapid progress of Christianity, will, perhaps, be surprised that its success was not still more rapid and still more universal.

Here then we see two systems pitted against each other, and left for six centuries to fight without disturbance from any third party. On the one side was Polytheism, with numberless divinities, to whom the most absurd, fantastic and obscene acts were attributed : without any established confession of faith or standard of doctrine : with priests who felt no zeal, and had little interest, in their religion : without church government, or any system of religious instruction ; without the important doctrine of a future state : without a code of morality as a fundamental or necessary part of the system ; and with a state of public opinion which tolerated many very immoral actions. And this Polytheism, so weak in itself, had lost its hold on the faith, and the affections of the people. On the other side was Christianity, with a divinity who was represented as one

Digitized by Google

person ; with a rule of faith in the Bible, which might be considered clear in that age ; with a zealous priesthood united under an efficient church government ; with a careful system of religious instruction ; with the impressive doctrine of a future life, with eternal rewards and punishment clearly set forth as a fundamental article of faith : and with a code of morality, which as understood in practice, was far superior to that tolerated by the general public opinion under the ancient creed. How can we be astonished that, after having been undermined by the philosophy of the Sages and the ridicule of the Comedians of Athens and Rome during seven centuries, and after having been beseiged and assaulted by the superior powers of Christianity during three centuries, that at last Polytheism was conquered and annihilated ? It deserves to be noted that the Greeks and Romans, previous to the birth of Jesus, had not only lost their faith in the creed of their fathers : but they had outgrown it. They needed something suitable for a higher stage of mental cultivation. They needed a worship without sacrifices, a God without partiality. They needed one sole divinity, not an innumerable or infinite multitude of Godlings. In all these respects the new faith was suited to their mental condition. Besides, Christianity was exceedingly elastic. Its doctrines might be interpreted to please the superstitious as well as the intelligent. Those who could not rise to the conception of pure Monotheism were permitted to worship the Virgin and a host of saints : those who were not satisfied with the simple preaching of the Gospel were amused by the gradual introduction of the Boodhistic rites, which were quite as well suited to please the vulgar fancy, as had been those of the Grecian mythology.

§ 102. But however miraculous may have been the propagation of Christianity in the early ages, all will be willing to admit, that it is not preserved now by the direct interference of Divine Providence ; and reasoning man may find it difficult to explain why Jehovah should do more for his faith eighteen hundred years ago, than he does to-day ; or, why the maintainance of his worship should not be as dear to him as its original establishment. That Christianity is losing its ground rapidly, no well-informed man can

Digitized by Google

doubt. Of the thirty-six millions of the French, it is said, and I doubt not, with entire correctness, that more than one-half are not Christians. Of the forty millions, who speak German as their mother tongue, at least one-half are pantheists, or skeptics, and of the sixty millions, who speak English, at least two thirds of the adult men are freethinkers. In Spain, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Spanish America, the Bible is losing ground with scarcely less rapidity than in the great centres of commerce and civilization. And it is remarked that in most of these countries, it is the most intelligent classes, who are the most skeptical.

And where Christianity still preserves its dominion, it takes such singular forms that we scarcely know whether its prevalence may be a source of credit to the Bible. Truth is always consistent with itself; but the numerous creeds of Christendom cannot be made to harmonize, and cannot be all true. Without venturing to decide which is right, we may safely believe, that most of them are wrong: that most of them are sadly corrupted from that Christianity which was preached by Paul.

It is strange, * if Christianity be a revelation from God, and if he established it upon earth by the immediate interposition of his omnipotent power, that it should so long have been mixed with so much human error. It is strange that, when he violated the order of nature to introduce it into men's minds, he did not annihilate those superstitions, which must necessarily begrime its purity, and weaken, if not entirely counteract, its beneficent influences. It is strange that he did not enlighten the converts to his truth, so that they might detect and discard those errors concerning religion and duty, which thousands of years had been accumulating in the world: that he did not sweep away at once all prejudices from the minds of men, so that his truth might find unrestricted entrance, and hold undisputed sway: and that he did not afterward, by a perpetual act of his power, so strengthen their understandings, and so restrain their passions and follies, that no false religious opinions should in any time to come, be introduced and maintained. Examine the history of opinions, and you will find that base

* This paragraph is altered from Norton.

superstitions and errors, which have once generally prevailed, have been very slowly removed from the Christian churches as well as from the philosophical schools,—more slowly, indeed, from the former than from the latter, and then only by entirely natural means. Common modes of conception, and the popular belief are transmitted from one generation to another, like the traditionary customs of the East. However unreasonable they may be, it is, for most part, only by a very gradual process that they are corrected. The men of one generation are the instructors of the next. Coming ignorant into the world, we are compelled to receive what others may teach us: to believe, under their direction, before we can exercise our own judgment: and when our instructors have been in error, it takes us a long time to discover the fact, and there are few who are able to discover it at all. The world is very dull and slow in unlearning its prejudices. False doctrines, which sprang up long before the introduction of Christianity, subsequently became connected with it, and still remain in a flourishing condition. In opposing the errors of the Christians, we are, in fact, often opposing only the errors of heathen philosophy, a little disguised, and somewhat modified by time and circumstances.

§ 103. Far from admitting that the propagation of Christianity is more wonderful than that of Mohammedanism, I would much prefer, as a mere question of literary argument, to maintain that the establishment of the latter is to be accounted for only on the theory of a divine interference. Mohammed used the sword; but where did he get his first soldiers? He already had a church before he could organize an army of believers. Besides, it is false, often as it is repeated, and much as it is dwelt upon by many advocates of the Bible, that he compelled his subjects to adopt his religion. He, as well, as his successors, gave the conquered the choice of the Koran, tribute *or* the sword—terms far more liberal than those granted by the Spaniards to the Moors and American Indians—far more liberal than those granted to the Saxons by Charlemagne, to the Dutch by Philip the Second, or to the Quakers by the Massachusetts Puritans. Moreover, Mohammedanism is preserved in comparative purity by all those who pre-

Digitized by Google

tend to receive the Koran as their Gospel. Gibbon,* writing of the Arabian prophet says "It is not the propagation, but the permanency of his religion, that deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved after the revolutions of twelve centuries, by the Indian, the African, and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran. If the Christian apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, could return to the Vatican, they might possibly inquire the name of the Deity who is worshipped with such mysterious rites in that magnificent temple; at Oxford or Geneva they would experience less surprise, but it might still be incumbent on them to peruse the catechism of the church, and to study the orthodox commentators on their own writings and the words of their master." Jehovah allows his own pure teachings to be corrupted with all manner of superstitions, and at the same time permits the fraudulent systems of heathen impostors to be preserved unadulterated through long ages!

But * it is said that Mohammedanism prospered because it flattered mankind with the hope of a sensual paradise. I shall admit that the words of Mohammed should be taken in a literal sense, when he says "that every one there should have the abilities of a hundred men to satiate himself with amorous enjoyments, as well as with the pleasures of taste in eating and drinking." But this would not counterpoise the idea which the Scripture gives us of the happiness of the future life: for it speaks of it as a state whose pleasures exceed whatever the eyes have seen or the ears heard, or the heart of man can conceive (1 *Cor. II.* 9). The moment that we believe the Scripture, we represent to ourselves the happiness of heaven, as something that surpasses all imagination: we can fix no bounds to it. Strain your ideas of happiness as you can, it is impossible for you to reach its utmost extent: your hopes carry you still farther; they are not to be limited by any bounds. Mohammed does not indulge you in this liberty: he confines you to certain limits: he multiplies a hundred times the pleasures you have already tasted, and leaves you there. What is a hundred, in comparison with an infinite number? But

* Decline and Fall—Ch. L.

† This and the succeeding paragraph are altered from Bayle.

Digitized by Google

can we say that the Scripture speaks only of pleasure in general, when we know that it makes use of corporeal images, with promises that we shall be satisfied with the fat of God's house, and bathed in rivers of pleasure (*Ps. XXXVI.* 9). The author of the *Apocalypse* describes Heaven as a place, full of precious stones of all kinds, and fitted up regardless of expense (*Rev. XXI*). We are told that these are mere metaphors, by which spiritual pleasures are expressed. But the Mohammedans interpret the Koran in the same way, and it is a poor rule which will not work both ways; sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander. People of the most sensual passions will always prefer the Christian paradise to that of Mohammed; for the latter promises only a limited amount of pleasure, while Jesus promised pleasure without limit. Now, what the sensual want is pleasure; they care not what kind it is,—provided it be pleasure to them; and where they hope to get the most, thither they will go. It matters not that Jesus does not expressly promise the pleasures of the table and the bed: his followers are permitted to hope for all these, and for as much more as they can imagine, besides. But surely, the followers of Mohammed did not believe in his religion, because he promised a heaven full of Houris: they believed in his heaven, because his faith otherwise appeared to them to be true.

The Christians also allege, that one reason why Mohammed gained so many converts, was that he taught a loose morality, and thus gained the favor of those sensual men to whose licentious desires he gave a loose rein. But I cannot see that this false prophet has derogated from the morality of the Gospel: on the contrary, I see that with regard to ceremonies, he has very considerably aggravated the Christian yoke. He commands circumcision, which is no small hardship to adult men; he enjoins his followers to abstain from certain meats, which is a species of servitude not at all agreeable to people of the world; he forbids the use of wine, abstinence from which is a great inconvenience in all countries where the vine grows, and in ancient times Egypt, Syria, and Palestine produced much wine, and Turkey might do the same now, if it were not for the religious prohibition. Besides all this, Mohammed imposes

Digitized by Google

fasts and very troublesome bathings, and a painful assiduity in prayer. He enjoins pilgrimages; in a word, you need only to consider the forty aphorisms into which his scheme of morals is digested, where you will find everything that is the most opposite to the corruption of the heart. Such is the precept of patience in adversity, that against speaking ill of one's neighbor, that recommending charity, that of renouncing vanity, that of abstaining from all injuries, and in short, that which is the sum of the law and the prophets, "Do to your neighbor as you would have him do unto you". Whoever asserts that Islamism is contrived to permit all kinds of sensual indulgence to its believers, must be ignorant of the Rhamadan, when the faithful believers, —and this includes nearly the entire population in Mohammedan countries—remain without eating or drinking, from sun-rise till sun-set, and this for many days, in the hottest season of the year, in the hottest countries on the globe. Such a practice must be a more severe trial than that of any moral duty.

§ 104. Or if the progress of Mohammedanism, which be it remembered gained most of its converts, not from an expiring polytheism, but from Christianity, while the latter was still young—if the progress of Mohammedanism is not to be compared with that of the teachings of the Galilean reformer, what shall we say of the propagation of Boodhism, which still less than Christianity, was aided by the might of armies, the policy of kings, or the attractions of a lax morality? And what shall we say of Mormonism, which had its birth in a country, where the people, taken as a whole, are the most enlightened of the earth, and which within less than thirty years has spread to all parts of the globe? Of all that there is of marvellous in the history of the establishment of new religions, there is nothing so wonderful as that of the faith of the prophet Joseph. He faced the light of the nineteenth century; met Christians and scoffers on terms of equality and treated them with polite cordiality; placed himself in society, on an equality with the commonest believers of his doctrines, or at least maintained no more reserve than the most radical democrat might approve; and yet was revered as the familiar friend of the omnipotent Creator, and as a man in every respect

Digitized by Google

deserving the most unbounded veneration. Neither was belief in his doctrine rewarded with the gratification of every sensual desire. Every believer was required, if possible, to take up his residence at the centre of the church. The more intelligent were required to go forth without money and preach the Gospel. The ignorant were compelled to give up everything for the common benefit of the faithful. A more industrious people never lived, and yet nearly all their gains were required to sustain the projects of the prophet or apostles. Thrice the whole body of the Church was expelled from their homes, and driven to seek a resting-place at a distance. They were always persecuted, maltreated, ridiculed and robbed. Their prophet was murdered and they were compelled to flee for safety to the centre of the continent. There their zeal still burns as bright as ever. They have missionaries in China, Australia, the Sandwich Islands, South America, Continental Europe, England, the United States, and in many of these countries a multitude of believers. In 1853, one person in 131 of the entire population of Utah territory was a missionary in a foreign land—a fact to which there is no approximation in the annals of the world. The book of Mormon has been translated in more than a dozen different languages; and if Mormonism is to go on increasing for the next three hundred, as it has gone on for the last thirty years, we may believe it will strangle Christianity, if the latter should succeed in living so long, though that is not likely.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XX.

NO GREAT LITERARY MERIT.

"It is probable that it [the Jewish Canon] comprehended all the remains of the ancient literature of the nation." NORTON.

§ 105. If an omnipotent, all-wise and all-good Deity should see fit to give a revelation of his will to men, in the form of a book, we might reasonably anticipate that it would possess, in a very high degree, all those qualities which are found in books calculated to enlighten the mind, stimulate the moral feelings, and gratify the taste. We might anticipate that it would contain a perspicuous, comprehensive, and perfect exposition of the fundamental principles which lie at the basis of moral and religious philosophy. We might expect, if any portion were historical in its nature, that we should there find, in unsurpassed and unsurpassable excellence, the critical acumen, the lucid arrangement, and the philosophical commentary, which may be considered among the chief merits of the most esteemed modern histories. If the inspired penman should offer us any poetry, we might anticipate that it should suffer nothing by comparison with the works of uninspired poets, but rather that it should possess a beauty and sublime grandeur of thought, and a force of expression, which should bring down to earth the glories of heaven. If the revelation should offer us any proverbs, we should look for a philosophy of common life and common sense vastly superior to the sayings of the Sancho Panzas of rude nations. And if a code of civil laws were offered to us as having been written out under the dictation of the all-wise ruler of the universe, for the government of his favorite nation, we might surely anticipate that they should be far superior to the crude and defective systems which have been painfully compiled by human law-givers. In short, if we might form an opinion beforehand of what a book-revelation from heaven should contain, we should expect that it would possess every kind

Digitized by Google

of literary merit in the highest possible degree, and possess an evident and great superiority, in every department of literary excellence, over all mere human compositions. This much we might anticipate, whether we suppose the Deity to be the author of the words or not. If he inspired the writers with the very language to be used, it would follow, as a matter of course, that that language should bear the marks of its divine authorship in the excellence of every line. Or, if he inspired the writers only with the ideas, we might presume that he would give them genius to appreciate, and literary ability to set forth the thoughts of inspiration. At least, the divine splendor of the thought should be there. In no case could we believe that he would intrust his word to persons so ignorant or foolish that their writings must at first sight appear inferior the compositions of those who reject and scoff at the divine truth.

Does the Bible come up to that estimate? If not, it was not composed by God Almighty. Christians should say either that I demand too much of him, or that the Bible comes up to my demands. As to the former, I shall not argue: and I shall have a few words to say upon the literary merit of the Bible.

§ 106. In the first place, as a whole, it is a clumsy, confused book. These is no regularity in its plan—history, poetry, criminal law, decrees for ceremonial observances, prophetic rhapsodies, and maxims of morality are mixed together in a very confused manner. Moses changes from history to law a dozen times without any explanation, or good cause discoverable. Isaiah changes in the same way from history to prophetic poetry. The same story is frequently told over repeatedly, as though when Jehovah had written a thing once, it was not enough. Thus, the books of *Chronicles* are a mere repetition of the matter contained in the books of *Samuel* and *Kings*, with the exception of some slight variations, which show that the memory of the divine author was not good, or that he was not under obligation to tell the same story always in the same way. So also the first four books of the New Testament, all purport to contain the same matter—a biography of Jesus. Besides, that the same matter is given repeatedly, it is evident that on many occasions, the writers have obtained their inspira-

Digitized by Google

tion from a previously existing book, instead of from Jehovah: thus exhibiting a poverty of spirit which would bring some slight discredit on a mere uninspired author. The passages which are given twice, word for word, in the Bible, without any good reason whatever for their repetition, would cover more than thirty pages of this book. Thus, chapter XIX. 2 *K.* is, with the exception of very few words, literally copied in the XXXVIIth chapter of *Isaiah.* Were both these chapters inspired by Jehovah? If so, he must have inspired the very words, for such a similarity of language could never have been owing to mere accident. But was it not enough, when he said a thing once? By a comparison of *Psalm CV.* 1–15, and 1 *Ch. XVI.* 8–22, we discover that a Psalm is repeated, and another case of the same kind will appear on an examination of *Psalm XVIII.* and 2 *S. XXII.* The uninspired poet, who should insert the same verses twice, in the same book, would be laughed at; but perhaps the Christians may be disposed to assert that Jehovah is the master of the rules of taste, and may dispense with them when he pleases.

§ 107. The historical parts of the Bible scarcely deserve the name of history. They are barren lists of the names of the kings, with a few particulars as to the length of their lives, and their reigns, and their disposition to obey the priests. Not one of the Biblical histories possesses a single merit, such as we seek in our modern histories—such as we find, in a high degree, in Hume, Gibbon, Carlyle, Macaulay, Grote, and Arnold. The book of *Judges* is wanting entirely in its chronology, and the valuable information conveyed in it, could be easily condensed into one tenth of the space which it now occupies. In many places, long intervals of time are passed over without any record of the events: in other places, inversions have been made, so that the order of time is seriously and repeatedly violated. In fact, if any author in this age, should publish such "historical" works as those of the Bible, he would be considered to be beneath the notice of critics. Why could not the ancient Jews write good history (like the Greeks and Romans, for instance) without inspiration? And when they were inspired, why did they make such miserable stuff?

§ 108. The poetry of the Bible is far better than the

Digitized by Google

history, and some portions of the *Psalms*, *Job* and *Isaiah* will compare creditably with uninspired verse. I will not say that there is any one poetical passage in the Hebrew Scriptures that may not find its equal in every point of poetic excellence, among the works of the English poets, without turning to the great treasures of the Greeks, Germans, Italians, Spanish, or French ; but it would, perhaps, be asking too much to demand that the divinity of a barbarous people and age should inspire his prophets with thoughts as grand, and language as appropriate and forcible as are to be found in the sublime flights of Gœthe, Shakspeare, or Milton.

§ 109. The laws of Moses are much inferior in every important respect to many other codes. They are neither clear, comprehensive, nor beneficient. They are vile in spirit and poor in execution. A great portion of the Mosaic law is taken up with directions for the most trifling observances,—directions which were evidently written by priests, whose religion consisted in ceremony, and nothing more. Consider the following :—

"And the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord ; and of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed [of leprosy], and upon the thumb of the right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot." *Lev. XIV.* 16, 17.

Jehovah ordered Ezekiel to lie on his left side, without turning, for three hundred and ninety days, to make bread of wheat and barley and beans and lentils and millet and fitches, mixed together, and to "bake it with dung that cometh out of man" in the sight of the Jews, and he should eat just twenty shekels of meat each day, and drink just the sixth part of a hin, neither more nor less. Ezekiel remonstrated against this hard fare, and Jehovah, as an especial favor, allowed him to take cow's dung instead of man's dung. *Ezek. IV.* 12–15.

Jehovah ordered Hosea, in very coarse language, to marry a harlot, and the prophet, with commendable obedience, did so. *Hosea, I.* 2, 3.

Jeremiah (*LI.* 63) wrote, "And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book that thou shalt bind

Digitized by Google

a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates." Harsh treatment that, for the Word of God.

The Levitical priest was made holy "by the blood of a ram being put on the tip of the right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." *Lev. VIII.* 23.

"Thou shall have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be when thou shalt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee." *Deut. XXIII.* 13.

Really, it does seem that Jehovah is rather overdoing his business as a lawgiver; he is "running it into the ground," as the Western slang has it.

"The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people that this man was born there" [in Jerusalem]. *Ps. LXXXVII.* 5.

He will surely think twice before he damns any native of that place.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of *Exodus* there is the following account :—

And Jehovah said to Moses, 'Come up unto me, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship afar off. * * Then went up Moses, and Aaron, and Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they *saw* the God of Israel. And there was under his *feet* a pavement of lucid sapphire, clear as the very heavens. And on the chief men of Israel He laid not his hand; and they saw God; and they ate and drank. And Jehovah said to Moses 'Come up to me upon the mount, and there remain, and I will give you tables of stone, with the law and commandments which I have written, that thou mayst teach the people. * * And the glory of Jehovah abode on Mount Sinai, and a cloud covered it for six days; and the seventh day He called Moses from the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of Jehovah was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain, in the view of the children of Israel. And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain, and Moses was upon the mountain forty days and forty nights. And Jehovah spake to Moses, saying"—

Before proceeding further, let us consider that, according to the history we are about to listen, as it were, to the very words of God, addressed to that minister with whom he "spoke as man to man." After all this tremendous solemnity of preparation, after having been summoned into the visible presence of the Deity, after having seen God and

Digitized by Google

lived, what must have been the expectation of the elders of Israel respecting the momentous import of the divine communication? Let us imagine that some of their number had formed just and enlarged conceptions of God, and had speculated upon the condition and prospects of mankind. They must have been looking earnestly for some revelation, which would send a stream of light through the darkness that rested upon the world; which would disclose to their erring and suffering race new revelations and new hopes; which should raise man, in his moral nature, nearer to the author of his being; which should be listened to with intense interest, wherever made known, by all human beings, in all ages to come. What, then, was the communication?

"And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying 'Tell the children of Israel to bring me an offering. From every one whose heart is willing to give, ye shall take my offering. And these are the offerings, which ye shall take from them: gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat's hair, and ram's skins dyed red, and seal's skins, and setim wood, oil for the lamps, aromatics for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and other stones, to be set in the ephod and breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. Ye shall make it according to the pattern of the tabernacle, and all its utensils which I show thee. They shall make an ark of setim wood, two cubits and a half in length, and a cubit and a half in breadth, and a cubit and a half in height: and thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and without thou shalt overlay it: and thou shalt make a moulding of gold about it." *Ex. XXIV.*

"Seven chapters," says Norton, "are filled with directions as trivial. So wholly unconnected are they with any moral, or religious sentiment, or any truth, important, or unimportant—except the melancholy fact of their having been regarded as a divine communication—that it requires a strong effort to read through with attention these pretended words of the Infinite Being. The natural tendency of a belief that such words proceeded from Him, wherever this belief prevailed, must have been to draw away the regard of the Jews from all that is worthy of man as a moral and intellectual being, and to fix it on the humblest objects of superstition."

§ 110. In writing this book, as a passionate attack on the Bible, I have sought to use every available weapon,

Digitized by Google

and particularly such as were offered to me by that book itself: but there is one weapon which I see clearly, and could handle easily, and yet dare not use: my courage fails me, when I approach the vulgar and obscene passages of the Old Testament. I cannot quote them: I will not venture even to insert a list of the texts referring to them all: but to justify myself for having mentioned the subject at all, I shall merely call the reader's attention to the twentieth verse of the twenty-third chapter of *Ezekiel*, which, in the disgusting grossness of its obscenity, far exceeds anything that can be found in *Don Juan*, or *La Pucelle*. Indeed, Voltaire and Byron are models of decency and delicacy as compared with Ezekiel. I have heard of an expurgated edition of *Don Juan* published for the benefit of young ladies; but I would suggest that the expurgation of that book will be of little use to protect their refinement of delicacy, so long as they are in habit of reading an unexpurgated Bible. The Catholics, with a better sense than the Protestants, of what is proper for young persons and those who have warm imaginations, do not permit them to read the Sacred Scriptures, and thus, they keep the natural sweetness of humanity far from the contagious corruption of the obscene images of the Hebrew prophets.

The amorous poetry of the Scriptures is very good in its kind. The *Song of Solomon* is a poetical conversation between a lover (the king himself), and his beloved—one of his numerous wives, or concubines. The lover says to his beloved "Thou hast dove's eyes;" "thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn:" "thy lips are like a thread of scarlet;" "thy neck is as a tower of ivory;" "thy two breasts are like two young roes;" "thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies;" "thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor;" "the joints of thy thighs are like jewels;" "the smell of thy garments [petticoats ?] is as the smell of Lebanon;" "thy stature is like to a palm-tree;" "I will go up to the palm-tree, and take hold of the boughs thereof;" "and until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." Bravo for Solomon! Neither is his beloved taken at random, nor is she chosen to mortify the flesh: through he has "three score

Digitized by Google

queens, and four score concubines, and virgins without number," yet she is more lovely than they all, "the fairest among women."

She replies to his amorous address: "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand"; "his locks are bushy and black as a raven"; "his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set"; "his cheeks are as a bed of spices;" "his lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh"; "his hands are as gold-rings set with beryl"; "his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires"; "his legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold"; "his mouth is most sweet"; "yea, he is altogether lovely"; "his love is better than wine"; "a bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me; he shall lie all night between my breasts." "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a young roe, or to a young hart upon a mountain of spices." "Let us get up early to the vineyards"; "there will I give thee my loves." "My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies." "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste"; "his left hand was under my head and his right hand did embrace me"; "he brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love: stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." Bravo for Solomon's mistress! Well done for both of them!

Well done too for the Christian theologians, who, as a body, have found their intellects and consciences sufficiently elastic to enable them to assert with a sanctimonious gravity, that this song is purely allegorical in its meaning,—Christ being the lover and the Church his beloved, who in speaking of each other's "bellies" mean merely to express their delights in the ways of godliness.

"But" as Drs. D'Oyly and Mant confess, in their Notes on the Bible, "though the work be certainly an allegorical representation, many learned men, in an unrestrained eagerness to explain the *Song*, even in its minutest and most obscure particulars, have too far indulged their imaginations; and by endeavoring too nicely to reconcile the literal with the spiritual sense, have been led beyond the boundaries which a reverence for the sacred writings

Digitized by Google

should ever prescribe. The ideas which the sacred writers furnish concerning the mystical relation between Christ and his Church, though very well accomodated to our apprehensions by the allusion of a marriage union, are too general to illustrate every particular contained in this poem; which may be supposed to have been intentionally decorated with some ornaments appropriate to the literal construction. When the general analogy is obvious, we are not always to expect minute resemblance, and should not be too curious in seeking for obscure and recondite allusions. Solomon, in the glow of an inspired fancy, and unsuspicious of misconception or deliberate perversion [his inspiration not extending so far as that], describes God and his church, with their respective attributes and graces, under colorings familiar and agreeable to mankind, and exhibits their ardent affection under the authorized figures of earthly love. No similitude could indeed be chosen so elegant and apposite, for the illustration of this intimate and spiritual alliance, as a marriage union; if considered in the chaste simplicity of its first institution, or under the interesting circumstances, with which it was established among the Jews."

"The books of scripture history and prophecy are very like one another," says Dr. Henry, "but this *Song of Solomon* is very unlike the songs of his father David. There is not the name of God in it: it is never quoted in the New Testament; we find not in it any expressions of natural religion or pious devotion; no, nor is it introduced by vision, or any of the marks of immediate revelation: it seems as hard as any part of scripture to be made 'a savor of life unto life'; nay, and unto those, who come to the reading of it with carnal minds and corrupt affections, it is in danger of being made 'a savor of death unto death'; it is a flower out of which they extract poison: and therefore the Jewish doctors advised their young people not to read it, till they were thirty years of age."

Dr. Adam Clarke with characteristic honesty and candor is disposed to confess that the thing is a mere love-song after all, and he adds, that "Eastern phraseology in such subjects is to vivid for European imagination. Let any sensible and pious medical man read over this book, and if at

Digitized by Google

all acquainted with Asiatic phraseology, say whether it would be proper, even in medical language, to explain all the descriptions and allusions of this poem." Poor, formula-worshipping Horne, is sadly pothered with such "revelations" as those of Solomon. He says "It has been objected that the *Song of Solomon* and the sixteenth and twenty-third chapters of Ezekiel's prophecy contain passages offensive to common decency. But this objection will fall to the ground by interpreting those parts allegorically." Precisely so; and by a similar process, judiciously applied, the licentious stories of *Tom Jones*, the *Chevalier de Faublas* and Lewis' *Monk* might be converted into model tales for the edification of pious youth. Neither would the discovery of such allegorical meaning be without precedent, among either Gentiles or Jews. Gibbon informs us that "As the traditions of pagan mythology were variously related, the sacred interpreters were at liberty to select the most convenient circumstances, and as they translated an arbitrary cipher, they could extract from any fable, any sense which was adapted to their favorite system of religion and philosophy. The lascivous form of a naked Venus was tortured into the discovery of some moral precept or physical truth; and the castration of Atys explained the revolution of the sun between the tropics or the separation of the human soul from vice and error."

There is a very funny but not very delicate story in the Vth and VIth chapters of the first book of *Samuel*. The Philistines had taken Jehovah's ark from the chosen people and they kept it for a long time. In the course of time they were taken with "emerods" or piles, and by some process of reasoning not clearly set forth in the Scriptures, they discovered that this disease was a punishment inflicted by the Jewish God upon them for keeping his ark, which they accordingly returned and with the ark they gave to the Lord golden figures, of the parts afflicted, representing faithfully the appearance of the disease. The Lord was apparently well pleased with the present, which was at least in good taste as the punishment he had inflicted on them.

§ 111. To read the Bible understandingly, requires much information, a knowledge of geography, history, chron-

Digitized by Google

ology, and the arts, besides the Hebrew and Greek languages, in which the books were originally written, and from which no translations have been made by divine authority. A man cannot read the Bible until he has learned his letters, and cannot appreciate its meaning until his mind has been educated to habits of thought by long training. And no matter how extensive the general literary education of a man may be, if he reads the Bible with inquisitive attention on what is before him, ten thousand questions must arise, for which he can obtain no satisfactory solution, except from extraneous sources. Far from being simple and clear, the Bible is the most equivocal in meaning of all books, as the multitude of sects may testify, which all seriously believe that their doctrines are taught in its pages. That is a very questionable divine revelation which is differently understood by different persons. The words "trinity" and "incarnation," are not in the Bible, and neither Jesus, nor the evangelists ever used the word "atonement," so far as we can learn. Did God Almighty not know what he was writing about, when he omitted to mention specially the doctrines, which were to serve as the corner and keystones of his church? Or did he intentionally leave his meaning in doubt, so as to furnish good cudgels for theological disputation, and Christian war and persecution? How, on the theory of the divinity and superhuman knowledge of Jesus, can the Christians explain the fact that he did not foresee and prevent the disputes of his followers in regard to the inspiration of Jewish books, which are now the subject of dispute? Why did he not describe the inspiration possessed by Moses and the prophets, and thus prevent serious quarrels? Why did Paul, or John not declare, which of the books, pretending to be inspired biographies of Jesus, or statements of his doctrine, had been composed at the dictation of the Holy Spirit? Why did not Jesus give a concise statement of his speculative and moral teaching, so that the churches might quote it as their "platform," instead of composing their contradictory confessions of faith, and thirty-nine articles? Is there anything in divine inspiration, which forbids composition according to the dictates of common sense? When an uninspired philosopher writes

Digitized by Google

a book, people generally know what he means. "There * are no sects in geometry and mathematics. When truth is evident, it is impossible to divide people into parties and factions. Nobody disputes that it is broad day at noon." Why must the principles of revealed religion be so obscure, when some of the truths discovered by unassisted human reason are so convincingly clear? Unrevealed truth has a great advantage over revelation itself.

Indeed, many of the most celebrated priests, have declared that the prophets and apostles wrote with two meanings—one apparent, the other hidden—one literal, the other figurative. If the literal meaning was foolish, or manifestly untrue, they could retreat to the figurative, and twist that in any way to suit themselves. Origen was one of the earliest Christian advocates of the double meaning, and he said that, "Were it necessary to attach ourselves to the letter, and to interpret the law after the manner of the Jews, or of the populace, I should blush to say aloud that it is God who has given us such laws; I should find even more grandeur and reason in human codes, such as those of the Athenians, Lacedæmonians, and Romans." In passages where no figurative interpretation will suffice, there it is seriously proposed to make the literal different from the apparent meaning. Professor Whewell, whose piety outruns his sense, gravely asks † "When should old interpretations [of Bible passages] be given up; what is the proper measure for a religious and enlightened commentator to make a change in the current interpretation of sacred Scripture? or, at what period ought the established exposition of a passage to be given up, and a new mode of understanding the passage, such as is, or seems to be required by new discoveries respecting the laws of nature, be accepted in its place? It is plain, that, to introduce such an alteration lightly and hastily, would be a procedure fraught with inconvenience; for, if the change were made in such a manner, it might be afterwards discovered, that it had been adopted without sufficient reason, and that it was necessary to reïnstate the old exposition. And the minds of the readers of scripture, al-

* VOLTAIRE.

† Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences—Chapter on the relation of History to Palaeontology.

Digitized by Google

ways to a certain extent, and for a time disturbed by the subversion of their long established notions, would be distressed without any need, and might be seriously unsettled. While, on the other hand, a too protracted and obstinate resistance to the innovation on the part of scriptural expositors, would tend to identify, at least in the minds of many, the authority of the scripture with the truth of the exposition, and therefore would bring discredit upon the revealed word, when the established interpretation was proved to be untenable."

§ 112. Though there are many objectionable moral doctrines in the Bible—though its doctrines are not original—though many passages, if blindly received, would fill the mind with superstition—though many other passages are grossly obscene—though much of it is occupied with mere trash of absurdities and repetitions—yet I do not deny that the book has considerable merits, and I must confess myself to have read much of it with pleasure. There is a devout and simple spirit in many passages, which comes "home" to a man who has a sense of his duties to his fellow-man. I would desire to have the better portions of it placed within the reach of every man and child, that they might read it not blindly, but with an eye open for its merits. Many a one weary and sore laden with the burdens of life, may there find rest and sympathy in the religiousness of a former age. The merits, too, of the English translation of the Bible are considerable. The style is unpretending, simple, clear, forcible, and beautiful.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BIBLICAL BOOKS NOT GENUINE.

"With few exceptions, there is not an entire book in the whole of the Old Testament, with respect to which we can determine, with complete accuracy, who was the author."—MORELL.

§ 113. It is but reasonable to anticipate that, if a book were offered to us as a revelation, written by a man according to the dictation of a deity, we should know who that man was. And our knowledge should not be mere matter of supposition, but should be based on strong positive evidence. Much of the credit of a book depends upon the man from whom it comes, and if he be unknown to us, we must doubt his trustworthiness. This question of the genuiness of the books of the Bible is an important one, and very different from the question whether the works ascribed to Thucydides, or Homer, were really written by such persons as Thucydides and Homer are represented in our books to have been. The poetry of the *Iliad* is equally pleasing to us, whether we know the author's name, or not. The discovery that he wrote to gratify a tyrant, to flatter a friend, to slander an enemy, or to falsify history would not destroy the value of his poem, which depends for its rank upon its merit as a work of art. In regard to Thucydides, the knowledge that he had written his history falsely, would detract from its value; but provided it be true, we care little how base his motives, or what the name of the writer, or his place of residence. So, too, as the question at issue is different, and more important, we want much stronger evidence to convince us fully of the truth of the alleged authorship of the Hebrew Scriptures. There is also much greater reason for us to doubt the genuineness of an ancient book, claiming to have been written by divine inspiration, than of a work offered to the public as an uninspired history or poem: because we know that there have been comparatively many more forgeries of alleged book-revelations than of histories and poems, and because we know that the

Digitized by Google

motives are stronger to induce forgery, of works of the former class than of the latter. Very few instances are recorded in which large books strictly historical, have been forged, and their authorship ascribed to famous personages of more ancient times: whereas many forgeries of books, intended to establish religious systems, or to teach religious doctrines, are mentioned in history. The inducements to forge religious books, are greater, and the probability of detection less: for, doubt of the word of the priests in early ages, was a greater offense by far than it is now: and thus their books were protected against hostile examination: whereas poems and histories are protected from no scrutiny, however severe. The knowledge that the poem, or history is spurious, and that the writer was a dishonest man, will not necessarily destroy the value of his work: his poetry may still be beautiful, or his facts instructive. But genuineness is an essential quality in a book-revelation: unless it be genuine, it can be nothing more than a mere human work.

The unlearned Christians believe every part of the Bible to be unquestionably genuine; and they think any doubt on the subject to be very sinful. But the doubters have very illustrious examples in the orthodox Christian church, particularly among the Protestants. Many of the most learned believers in Jesus, during the first four centuries of the Christian era, rejected as spurious various books now received in the New Testament Canon. Luther questioned the genuineness or truthfulness of the Books of *Chronicles*, *Job*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Esther*, *Isaiah*, *Hebrews*, and *Revelations*. Neander and Arnold denied the genuineness of much of *Daniel*; Calvin, Grotius, Erasmus, and Neander doubted whether Peter was the writer of the Second Epistle, which bears his name; and Zuinglius and Erasmus did not give full credit to *Revelations*. Origen, who was the first learned Christian of critical ability, and who undoubtedly had much information which is now forever lost, expressed doubts of the genuineness of the books known to us as the *Hebrews*, second epistle of *James*, second of *Peter*, second and third of *John*, and *Jude*. He also considered the book of *Hermas* as an inspired book. After Origen, in order of time and trustworthiness as a critic, comes Eusebius (300, A.D.),

Digitized by Google

who says that among the books, the genuineness of which were a matter of dispute in his age, are *James*, *Jude*, second *Peter*, and second and third *John*. When such men as these might doubt, surely Christians of to-day may also have their doubts.

"That* the Old Testament is not the forgery of a single impostor is proved by every page. What varety in language and expression! Isaiah does not write like Moses, nor Jeremiah like Ezekiel, and between these and the minor prophets, there is again a great diversity of style. The style of Moses is distinguished by its scrupulous, grammatical correctness; the book of *Judges* is filled with provincialisms and barbarisms; in *Isaiah* we meet with old words under new inflections; *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel* have their Chaldaisms; and in short, as we trace the succession of writers from the earlier to the later ages, we find in the language a gradual decline, till it finally sinks into a dialect of broad Chaldee. Then, too, what diversity in the march of ideas, and range of imagery! In the hand of Moses and Isaiah the harp is deep and loud, but its tone is softer when touched by David. The muse of Solomon is decked in the splendors of a luxurious court, while her sister wanders, with David, in an artless dress, by streams and banks, through the fields, and among flocks. One poet is original like Isaiah, Joel, and Habbakuk; another is imitative like Ezekiel. One strikes out the untrodden path of genius, while another strolls by his side in the beaten foot-way. Rays of learning beam from one, while his neighbor never emits a spark of literature. In the oldest writers we see strong lines of Egyptian tint, which grow fainter and fainter on the canvass of their successors, and at last disappear Finally, in the manners, what a beautiful gradation! At first all is simple and unaffected, as in the poems of Homer, and among the Bedouin Arabs at the present day. By degrees this noble simplicity declines into luxury and effeminacy, and vanishes at last in the luxury of the court of Solomon. Nowhere is there a violent transition, but a gradual and progressive course throughout."

* EICHHORN Translated by Edward Everett, in his reply to G B. English against Christianity.

Digitized by Google

§ 114. The *Pentateuch*, as the first five books of the Bible are called, claims Moses for its author (*Deut. XXXI.* 9), and was repeatedly accredited as genuine by Jesus. The Christians argue that the *Pentateuch* must be genuine because it was the code of ecclesiastical and political law of the Jewish nation, and represents itself as having been given to them by Moses, and to have been accepted in his time. Now, laws are not readily changed, and it is absurd to suppose that if Moses had given them no law, they would have submitted in a subsequent age to a strange and complex code which claimed for itself to have been given to them by him. Such conduct would be unexampled and incredible. As a nation, they must always have had laws, and if we believe that the *Pentateuch* is spurious, we must believe that they not only accepted the strange law, but that they discarded their previous code. We can trace the history of the Jews back to a very remote period, and we do not discover any traces of any other code. Besides, the nation had a number of religious observances,—some of them very singular ones,—and their origin is accounted for in the *Pentateuch*. These accounts were considered to be correct by the Hebrews, in every age, of which we have any knowledge, and their traditions, on such points, must deserve much credit. Such solemn religious observances as the Circumcision, the Passover, the Feast of the Tabernacles, and the Sabbath could not be instituted on slight occasions, nor would the account of their origin be likely to be entirely lost from tradition. The mere fact that the *Pentateuch* was ascribed to Moses, by the Jews, in all ages, is proof of the fact as complete as we have for the genuineness of most very ancient documents.

But, on the other hand, there are many reasons for denying the authorship of the *Pentateuch* to any one man who lived fifteen centuries before Jesus, derived from an examination of the book itself; and there are other reasons to be derived from later Jewish history for denying that it was known or received as law during a large period of the Hebrew monarchy. Shortly before the Babylonish Captivity, it appears that a book called the Law of Moses, which was probably the *Pentateuch*, or a portion of it, was found in the Temple by a high priest, who had never heard of such a

Digitized by Google

book or such a law (2. *K. XXII.*, 2. *Ch. XXXIV*). He carried it to the king, who had been on the throne for eighteen years, and he had never heard of such a book or such a law. But the monarch seems to have felt that this was no common book; he, apparently, felt that his people had committed a serious offence by having been ignorant of it; "he rent his clothes;" and he said to the priest "Go and inquire of the Lord for me and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that are found." The reply given by the oracles of Jehovah appears to have been to the effect that this was a genuine revelation from heaven, written by an ancient and famous chief of the nation, and that it was the duty of the Hebrews to receive it as their code of moral, civil and ecclesiastical law. When we examine the Jewish history previous to the discovery of this book, we discover few traces of any laws given by Moses; and no satisfactory evidences of the possession of such a book as the *Pentateuch*. "The author* of the book of *Kings* relates that after the discovery of the book of the Law, in the reign of Josiah, a passover was celebrated in Jerusalem, and adds 'Such a passover had not been kept from the time of the Judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah' (2. *K. XXII.* 22). With the exception of what is found in the Pentateuch itself this is the only mention of the keeping of the passover in any historical book of earlier date than the *Chronicles* (written after the captivity); nor is there in the Prophets, who wrote before the captivity, any distinct allusion to what afterwards became the great national festival. If the writer of the book of *Kings* meant to say that so splendid a passover had not been celebrated before, not even in the days of Solomon, this would be almost equivalent to saying that no passover had been celebrated at all. If his meaning were that the rites of the ceremonial-law were more strictly observed than they had been before, the remark must imply, that they were then, for the first time, fully observed since the days of the Judges.

"In the book of *Nehemiah*, written more than a thousand years after the [alleged date of the] death of Moses, there is a mention of the celebration of the Feast of the Taberna-

* NORTON. Genuineness of the Gospels.

Digitized by Google

cles: and in speaking of it, the writer says, 'Since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun, to that day, had not the children of Israel done so' (*Neh. VII*). 'We see,' says the learned Joseph Mede, 'how expressly the Feast of Tabernacles was commanded yearly to be observed. Nevertheless, which is past all belief, it was never kept, at least in the main circumstance of dwelling in booths, from the time of Joshua, till after the return from the captivity.' Le Clerc remarks that 'this law [concerning the Feast of the Tabernacle] was neither obscure nor hard to be observed. But, as I have often said, the laws of Moses were never accurately observed.' The national festivals, appointed by a ceremonial law, are, of all its ordinances, the least likely to be neglected.

"The writer of the book of *Chronicles* himself gives us to understand (2 *Ch. XXXVI.* 21) that the seventy years of the captivity answered to seventy sabbatical years, which had not been kept. If, as is implied in what is said, the sabbatical year had not been observed for between four and five centuries preceding the captivity—that is for more than five centuries before the time of the writer—there is little reason to believe that any evidence then existed of its ever having been observed. With the sabbatical years, the years of jubilee were intimately connected, and if there were no sabbatical year, we cannot reasonably suppose that there were any years of jubilee. Yet the laws, regarding the sabbatical years and the jubilee, are among the most important of those concerning the rights of property, and at the same time are represented to have been intimately interwoven with the theocratical government of the Jews, as implying a periodical miracle."

"According to a law in *Leviticus* (*XVII.* 3–9), it was enjoined, under a severe penalty, that there should be no sacrifices only where the Tabernacle was placed. According to another law in *Deuteronomy* (*XII.* 2–14), after the Jews were established in Palestine, one place of national worship was to be designated, where alone sacrifices were to be offered. * * But it does not appear elsewhere from the early Jewish history, extending down to the building of Solomon's Temple, that such laws existed; on the contrary, altars were raised, and sacrifices offered by holy men in various places, and in places where the Tabernacle

Digitized by Google

was not, and such facts are related without censure by the historian." Thus, Samuel sacrificed at Mizpah (1 *S. VII.* 5–9), while the Tabernacle was at Nob (1 *S. XXI. XXII*), and Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon, because "that was the great high place."

The writers of the earlier books of the Bible appear to be ignorant of the *Pentateuch*. Jesus and the Evangelists made very frequent appeal to, and numerous quotations from the Mosaic books, but the Hebrew prophets previous to the captivity do not. "It is incredible * that these books, if written by Moses and carrying with them the authority of God, should not have been appealed to by the prophets, the public teachers of the religion of God, who ought to have made them the basis of their instructions. Nor is it probable that they should have come so near perishing as to be saved only by a providential discovery, just before the nation fell into ruin and captivity. The tradition of the Jews, that no copy of them was extant on the return of the nation from their captivity, favors much more the supposition that they had their origin after that event than the supposition which ascribes them to Moses. And if it appear that before that event fundamental ordinances of the Levitical law were not observed, and even that individuals specially favored by Heaven, acted contrary to them, without censure from God or Man, it affords a presumption, more or less strong, that the Levitical law had not God for its author, nor Moses for the organ of its communication."

There are many archæological expressions in the *Pentateuch* which were evidently not written until after the time of Moses.

"And he [Jehovah] buried him [Moses] in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre *unto this day.*" *Deut. XXXIV.* 6.

"At *that* time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, *unto this day.*" *Deut. X.* 8.

"The Canaanite was then [in the time of Abraham] in the land." *Gen. XII.* 6. *XIII.* 7.

"Ye shall keep my statutes * * that the land spue not you

* NORTON

Digitized by Google

out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you." *Lev. XVIII.* 26. 28.

"And Moses said unto Aaron 'Take a pot and put an omer of manna therein.' * * Now an omer [an ancient measure] is the tenth part of an ephah." *Ex. XVI.* 33. 36.

There are also many anachronisms, of which a writer in the position of Moses could not have been guilty :—

"These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." *Gen. XXXVI.* 31.

Hebron mentioned in *Genesis* (*XIII.* 18) was a modern name (*Josh. XIV.* 15. *XV.* 13), probably given in honor of the grandson of Caleb (1. *Ch. II.* 41). Dan is spoken of as the extreme limit of the land of Gilead (*Deut. XXXIV.* 1. *Gen. XIV.* 14); but the place was not called Dan until the time of the Judges (*Jud. XVIII.* 29). Jair is mentioned in *Deuteronomy* (*III.* 14.) as being known by that name "unto this day;" but according to the book of *Judges* (*X.* 3. 4.), the place was named from Jair who judged Israel long after Moses.

There is another class of anachronisms concerning the Mosaic law itself. The commandments are spoken of as well known (*Gen. XXVI.* 5.; *Ex. XVI.* 28) before they were given (*Ex. XX*). Priests are spoken of as recognised ministers of Jehovah (*Gen. XIV.* 18. 20. *Ex. XXI.* 22) before the *Pentateuch* gives any account of the establishment of a priesthood with divine authority. The Tabernacle is mentioned as in existence (*Ex. XXXIV.* 34. 35), and afterwards we hear of its construction (*Ex. XXXVI. XL*). The Levites are spoken of as having landed estates (*Lev. XXV.* 32. 34), which they did not acquire till long afterwards (*Num. XXXV.* 1–5). Noah was told to make a distinction between clean and unclean beasts, though the ordinance in reference to unclean meats was given in the Levitical law as something new.

These passages were evidently not written by Moses. No writer would use the phrase "the Canaanite was *then* in the land," till he was driven out and that did not happen till long after the time of Moses. Neither did the land "spue out the nations that were before" the Jews, until long after his time. Neither could he have given a list of the kings

Digitized by Google

who reigned in Edom previous to the time of Saul. Most of the Christian commentators on the Bible admit that these passages are not genuine, but assert that they were interpolated by transcribers, though they can produce no evidence to sustain their assertion. They admit the spuriousness of a few passages for the sake of being able to assert the genuineness of the rest.

Genesis appears on a close examination to be a compilation of two older documents, containing similar accounts of the creation, the deluge, the generations of men, and the history of the Jewish patriarchs. These two ancient documents are marked by many differences of style, and are called the "Jehovistic" and the "Elohistic" because they respectively entitle the Deity "Jehovah" or "Jehovah-Elohim," and "Elohim,"—the former translated "Lord" or "Lord God" and the latter "God," in the English Bible. In the beginning of *Genesis*, we can plainly trace the two old documents. The Elohistic paper begins and tells how Elohim (God) created the heaven and the earth in six days, with the work of each day; how on the fifth day he made "the waters bring forth abundantly" all kinds of fishes and fowls: how on the sixth day he made the "earth bring forth" all beasts, cattle, and creeping things; how he created man and women together, "in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them;" and how Elohim finally saw that his work was good and rested on the seventh day. Every time the Deity is mentioned in this account (*Gen. I.* 1–*II.* 3) he is styled "God" in the English version. After the story of Creation has been told thus completely we find that at the fourth verse of the second chapter, another account begins "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God [Jehovah Elohim] made the earth and the heavens;" and in the following twenty verses we have his story of creation. He knows nothing about distinct days of creation. He says the fowls were made out of the ground, simultaneously with the land animals, places the creation of Adam before that of the brutes, and concludes by giving Eve to Adam as a supplement. The improbability that both accounts were written by one man, and that man an inspired prophet,

Digitized by Google

will appear evident to any one who will read the two chap ters attentively.

These "Jehovistic" and "Elohistic" documents can be traced without difficulty through *Genesis*, and many traces of them are found in other portions of the *Pentateuch*. Both documents are evidently records of Jewish traditions, but the writer had not received the traditions in the same shape. They are the cause of a number of discrepancies and repetitions, which the compiler, who patches the work together, did not see fit to correct. Thus, the Jehovistic legend (*Gen. IV.* 16–24) says that the descendants of Cain, Adam's eldest son, were Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methusael and Lamech; while, the Elohistic compiler, speaking as though he had never heard that Adam had such a son as Cain, says (*Gen. V.* 3–26) that Seth's descendants were Enos, Cainaan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methusaleh and Lamech. It is evident that the same legendary personages were referred to, but credited to different parents. Noah is directed by Elohim to take two of every species of animal into the ark *Gen. VI.* 19, 20); but Jehovah directs him to take pairs of unclean beasts and sevens of clean beasts (*Gen. VII.* 2). The story of the deluge is twice told. One of the most remarkable repetitions is in regard to the appropriation of the wife of one of the patriarchs by a foreign monarch. When Abram was seventy-five years old (*Gen. XII.* 4), and Sarai his wife was sixty-five (*Gen. XVII.* 17), they were about to enter Egypt; and the father of the faithful, knowing that there is no accounting for tastes, and suspecting that the King of Egypt would be likely to fall in love with Sarai, bethought him that it would be a reasonable precaution to pretend that she was his sister. Having laid his plans, the patriarch entered Egypt, and as he expected the fame of the old lady's loveliness reached the ears of the monarch; and he took her into his harem without opposition; but "the Lord plagued Pharoah and his house with great plagues," till he discovered that he was trespassing upon Abram's preserves (*Gen. XII.* 10–19), and he gave her up Twenty-five years later, when Sarah was ninety years old, and after "it had ceased to be with her after the manner of women" (*Gen. XVIII.* 11), her beauty created such an excitement in Gerar that King Abimelech sent and took

Digitized by Google

her, Abraham having previously declared, as in Egypt, that she was his sister; and in this case, too, the monarch was induced to send her back to her husband by the interposition of the Lord (*Gen. XX*). In each case the devout couple obtained a great store of presents for their complaisance. These are rather odd tales, but they appear still odder, when we read that another adventure of the same kind befell Rebekah, twenty or thirty years later, among the uncircumcised Philistines, who took her, on Isaac's representation, that she was his sister (*Gen. XXVI*). These are evidently confused accounts of the same legend. According to the Elohistic paper, Esau sold his birth-right to Jacob for a mess of pottage (*Gen. XXV.* 27–35), while the Jehovistic author says that Jacob got the birth-right by deceiving his father (*Gen. XXXVII.* 1–40). There is a discrepancy between the two documents in regard to the cause of the institution of the Sabbath.

"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; *wherefore* the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it." *Ex. XX.* 11.

Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out of thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm; *therefore* the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." *Deut. V.* 15.

The following columns give the most important divisions of the Elohistic and Jehovistic papers; and upon comparison of the passages many contradictions and awkward repetitions may be found.

	Elohistic.		Jehovistic.
Creation........	*Gen.*	*I.* 1–*II.* 3...	*Gen.* *II.* 4–*III.* 24.
Genealogies......	"	*V.* 1–32....	" *IV.* 1–26.
Deluge..........	"	*VI.* 9–22...	" *VI.* 1–8; *VII.* 1–5.
Deluge..........	"	*VII.* 11–16..	" *VII.* 17. 23.
Rainbow........	"	*IX.* 1–17...	" *VIII.* 20–22.
Noah..........	"	*IX.* 28.....	" *IX.* 20–27.
Genealogies.....	"	*XI.* 10–26..	" *X.*
Abraham's Covenant........	"	*XVII.*......	" *XV.*
Sodom.........	"	*XIX.* 29...	" *XIX.* 1–28. 30–38.
Seizure of wife..	"	*XX.*........	" *XII.* 10–19, *XXVI.* 1–11
Isaac and Ishmael	"	*XXI.* 1–21..	" *XVI.*
Abimelech......	"	*XXI.* 22–34	" *XXVI.* 26–33.
Abraham tempted	"	*XXII.* 1–13	" *XXII.* 14–18.

Digitized by Google

	Elohistic.	Jehovistic.
Abraham tempted	*Gen.XXII.*	*Gen.*
Abraham tempted	" *XXV.* 1–18.	
Isaac's marriage.	" *XXV.* 19–21. 24–26.	" *XXIV. XV.* 22. 23.
Esau..........	" *XXV.* 27–35.	" *XXVII.* 1–40.
Esau..........	" *XXVII.* 46; *XXVIII.* 9..	" *XXVII.* 41–45
Quails.........	*Ex. XVI.*......	*Ex. XI.*
Commandments..	" *XX.* 1–13...	*Deut.V.* 6–21.
Lord and Moses.	" *VI.* 30; *VII.* 12.	*Ex. IV.* 10–16.
Horeb.........	*Num.XX.* 1–13...	" *XVII.* 1–7.

Leviticus is principally Elohistic: the fragmentary character of *Numbers* may be easily discovered; and *Deuteronomy* is mostly Jehovistic. De Wette and many other very able Biblical critics think that the Elohistic document was written about 1000 B. C., and the Jehovistic paper somewhat later.

The evidence that the editor of the *Pentateuch* did not write the book as we have it, but used older documents, is so strong, as set forth by those who have discussed the matter thoroughly, that few Christian authors venture to say anything against it. Among those who have recognized the patchwork are Whately, Morell, Palfrey, Kenrick, Norton, Parker, Eichhorn, Bauer, Astruc, Vater, Ewald, Von Bohlen, and DeWette. Horne in the earlier editions of his *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* says that "To this hypothesis [of patchwork] there is but *one* objection, and we apprehend this is a fatal one: namely, the total silence of Moses as to any documents consulted by him." Again he says "If this be admitted [that the Spirit of God directed Moses in the choice of the facts recorded in his work] it is of no consequence whether Moses compiled the book of *Genesis* from annals preserved in the family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or wrote the whole of it by immediate inspiration." "In the last edition (Dec., 1856), however of Horne's book, which has always been considered as one of the valuable orthodox text-books, it is confessed that only a small portion of the *Pentateuch* was written by Moses.

Palfrey, one of the most learned, able, candid, and up-

Digitized by Google

right of the Christian authors, acknowledges that *Genesis* is formed by the union of fragments; but he contends that Moses was the editor, and intended it merely as an introduction to the four inspired books of the law. In giving this law to the Hebrews, Moses thought it proper to explain the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, "what communications they had received from the Deity," what title they had to Canaan, from which they were about to expel other nations, and what was the origin of the religious observances of the Jewish patriarchs. All the information necessary on these points he found in old traditions, which he accepted and published as he found them. "If we assume Moses to have been divinely instructed in what he recorded in *Genesis*," says Palfrey, "we do it altogether without authority from him. Communications received from the Deity, and recorded in the later books of the *Pentateuch*, he announces as such, saying repeatedly, 'The Lord spake unto Moses,' and 'The Lord said unto me.' But neither this language, nor any equivalent, anywhere occurs in *Genesis*. The reasons of the case would not justify the supposition. The introduction of a pure [!] religious system into an idolatrous world is proper matter for direct revelation, nor without such revelation could Moses or any other man become possessed of it. Not so with historical materials. On the one hand, the need of them is not so urgent; and on the other, it is the common course of things for them to be collected and handed down in a more or less pure and trustworthy state. Each age instructs its successor; nor is it to be doubted that notices, such as they were, of earlier times, existed in the time of Moses, as in every other period since there was anything to record or report. The actual existence of such notices before Moses' time, is referred to on the face of the record. Different parts of the composition are marked by varieties of style and language, effectually distinguishing them from one another, and indicating that they had several sources. The contents of such parts are sometimes of a nature to show that they not only had not a common origin, but that they were not elaborated by Moses, when they had come into his hands, so as to make one consecutive and consistent narrative. I think we shall have occasion to own that different portions, distinguished by diversities of style referred

Digitized by Google

to, sometimes repeat, and sometimes—which is of more consequence—contradict each other." Let it be remarked in regard to Palfrey's theory, that—

1. It is the only standing point left for educated men pretending to believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible.

2. The theory was not advanced till it became impossible to defend the assertion that Moses was the sole author of *Genesis*.

3. It convicts Moses of having incorporated falsehood in the Holy Scriptures, and of having done his task as editor badly.

4. It reduces the accounts of the creation, the fall of man, the great age of the antediluvians, the marriage of the sons of God with the daughters of men, the deluge, the confusion of tongues, the destruction of Sodom, the choice of Abraham and the institution of circumcision, to mere fables: and if man did not fall by Adam, he cannot be saved by Jesus.

5. It proves that Jesus frequently erred in accrediting the writings of Moses as divinely inspired.

Critics say that the style of the *Pentateuch* is too polished for so rude a people as the Jews were fifteen centuries before Christ, and that it bears a close resemblance in style to works written in the time of David. De Wette says, "The opinion that Moses composed these books is not only opposed by all the signs of a later date, which occur in the book itself, but also by the entire analogy of the history of Hebrew literature and language. But even admitting it was probable, on account of the influence the *Pentateuch* had on the language of the Hebrews, and on account of the analogy of the Syriac and Arabic languages, that during a period of nearly a thousand years the Hebrew language had changed as little as it would appear on this hypothesis, from the slight difference between the style of the *Pentateuch* and other books of the Old Testament, even the latest of them—still, even then it would be absurd to suppose that one man could have created beforehand the epico-historical, the rhetorical and poetic styles in all their extent and compass, and have perfected these three departments of Hebrew literature, both in form and substance, so far that all subsequent writers found nothing left for them,

Digitized by Google

but to follow in his steps." Thus much for the question whether Moses wrote the *Pentateuch*.

§ 115. The book known as the book of *Joshua* claims to have been written by that chieftain (*XXIV.* 26), but the claim is not sustained by any satisfactory evidence, while there is a large amount of testimony to show that Joshua could not have been the author. The book remarks (*VI.* 27) that Joshua's fame was noised throughout all the country : a mode of expression in regard to self in very bad taste for a mere human writer, but much worse if it pretended to have been written by divine inspiration. Luz is mentioned (*XVI.* 2), but Luz was not built till after the death of Joshua (*Jud. I.* 26). The children of Dan are said to have taken Leshem (*XIX.* 47), but that place (Laish), is said in *Judges* (*XVIII.* 27, 29) to have been taken long after. Debir was twice conquered and destroyed, according to Joshua (*X.* 38, 39, and *XV.* 17) : and, much later, it was again subjected to the same operation (*Jud. I.* 11, 13). The book represents Joshua as twice taking Hebron, and destroying it and its inhabitants.

"Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him unto Hebron ; and they fought against it, and they took it and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein ; he left none remaining (according to all that he had done to Eglon), but destroyed it utterly and all the souls that were therein." *Josh. X.* 36. 37.

"And at that time came Joshua and cut off the Anakims [giants] from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel." *Josh. XI.* 21.

Caleb said unto Joshua "Now, therefore, give me this mountain [Hebron] * * if so be the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them [the Anakims] out. * * And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai." *Josh. XIV.* 12. *XV.* 14.

"Now, after the death of Joshua, it came to pass that * * Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron, and they slew Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai." *Jud. I.* 1. 10.

The Jebusites and children of Judah are represented in *Joshua* (*XV.* 63), as dwelling together in Jerusalem to *this day*, whereas it is a well known fact that Jerusalem was not conquered till the time of David (2 *S. V.* 5 ; 1 *Ch.*

Digitized by Google

XI. 4). We are not informed that the children of Judah dwelt any considerable time in Jerusalem before the conquest; and they could not possibly have dwelt there long before Joshua, as the phrase "to this day" would lead us to believe. The book of *Jasher* is mentioned (*Josh. X.* 31) as authority for the miraculous arrest of the sun; but that book could not have been written till after the time of David. 2 *S. I.* 18.

§ 116. Christian writers do not pretend to know either the author, or date of the book of *Judges*. The history of the son of Joash appears to have been derived from two separate documents: in one (*VI.* 11–*VIII.* 28) he is styled Gideon: and in the other (*IX.*) he is called Jerubbaal. In one place it is stated that Judah took Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron with their coasts (*I.* 18), and elsewhere it is asserted that the Canaanites, the Zidonians, and five lords of the Philistines were still in those places (*III.* 1–31). The sentence "In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own eyes," could scarcely have been written before the time of Saul.

§ 117. The books of *Samuel*, originally but one book, do not profess, and are not claimed to have been written by the prophet Samuel, but appear to be named after him, because the record is mainly occupied with his acts, and the history of the Jews during his lifetime. The numerous contradictions appear to show that the book is a compilation or collection of old documents. Samuel anointed Saul king by divine command (1 *S. IX.* 1–*X.* 16), and the monarch is publicly confirmed in his dignity in consequence of his victory over the Ammonites (1 *S. XI.*); but elsewhere we are told that Samuel chose Saul king by lot, when driven by the demands of the people (1 *S. VIII. X.* 17–27), the prophet is dissatisfied with the establishment of the monarchy (*XII.*) and Jehovah declares that the people, by demanding a king, have rejected, not Samuel, but himself (*XII.* 12). The prophet's death is recorded twice (1 *S. XXV.* 1. *XXVIII.* 3). The Ziphites inform Saul that David is on the hill of Hachilah, on the south of the desert, (1. *S. XXIII.* 19), and afterwards they tell him that he is hidden in the hill of Hachilah in the east of the desert (1 *S. XXVI.* 1). David spares Saul's life in a cave (1. *S. XXIV*),

Digitized by Google

and afterwards in a camp (1. *S. XXVI*). The statement that "Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day" (1. *S. XXVIII.* 6), must have been written after the time of Solomon.

§ 118. The books of *Kings* give the history of the Hebrews from the accession of Solomon to the revolt of the ten tribes, the history of Judah till the time of the Captivity, and a partial history of Israel for 241 years after the Separation. The books were evidently written about the time of the Captivity. The author is unknown; but there are passages or chapters which are copied to or from the book of *Isaiah*. Compare 2. *K. XIX.* 1–37 with *Is. XXXVII.* 1–38; and 2. *K. XVIII.* 13, 17–37 with *Is. XXXVI.* 1–22; and 2. *K. XX.* 12–21 with *Is. XXXIX.* 1–8. There are also passages which are copied to or from *Jeremiah*. Compare *Jer. LII.* with 2. *K. XXIV–XXV.* Isaiah certainly could not have written these books, for he died long before the Captivity; nor could Jeremiah, for the concluding verses mention events which happened after his time.

§ 119. The books of *Chronicles* were written after the time of the Captivity, probably about 500 B. C. But the list of descendants of Jehoakim, brother of King Zedekiah (1. *Ch. III.*), extending twelve generations beyond the return from the Captivity, must have been written as late as 360 B. C. The author of the *Chronicles* is unknown. His dishonesty was mentioned in the chapter on *Contradictions*, and some specimens given of his compositions. A few more examples may be inserted here. As before remarked, the Chronicler loves to heighten the glory of David and his descendants, and to magnify the importance of the Levites and the Levitical religion. Thus he says (1. *Ch. XI.* 3) that David was anointed "according to the word of Jehovah;" and the Edomites and Libnah revolted from Jehoram "because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers." The book of *Kings* does not express these ideas in the parallel passages. The latter book says that when some soldiers attacked Jehoshaphat, mistaking him for King Ahab of Israel, he cried out, and they desisted, because they recognized him (1. *K. XXII.* 31, 32): the Chronicler says they desisted because "the Lord God helped him, and moved

Digitized by Google

them to depart from him" (2. *Ch. XVIII.* 31). Solomon built a palace in Millo for one of his wives, a daughter of Pharaoh, and the fact is simply stated in *Kings* (1. *KXIX.* 24), but in *Chronicles* (2. *Ch. VIII.* 11) we are told that Solomon's motive for building this palace was that the presence of an idolatrous woman in the house of David, which had been hallowed by the presence of the Ark of God, would be sacrilegious! Compare the two following accounts of what happened at the dedication of Solomon's Temple :—

"When Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice saying 'Blessed be the Lord,' "etc. 1 *K. VIII.* 54–56.

"When Solomon had made an end of praying, *the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burned offering and the sacrifice and the glory of the Lord filled the house.* And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. *And when the children of Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying 'For he is good, for his mercy endureth forever.'* 2 *Ch. VII.* 1–3.

It is impossible that such a lie as this could have been published in, or near the time of Solomon.

In *Kings* the priests are accused of embezzling money, collected to repair the temple (2 *K. XII.* 7. 4–16); but there is no hint to that effect in *Chronicles.* 2 *Ch. XXIV.* 4–14.

The most remarkable of all the discrepancies between *Kings* and *Chronicles*, and one evidently intended to exalt the glory of Judah and Jehovah, is found in the passages referring to the hostility of kings Abijah and Jeroboam. The former book says that Abijah was a wicked king, and had war with his rival (1. *K. XV.* 3, 7). The chronicler says that Abjiah was pious; that he took the field with 400,000 men against Jeroboam, who was at the head of 800,000 men; and in a great battle the King of Israel was defeated, and 500,000 of his men slain. It seems that 1,200,000 soldiers sent into the field at one time by two

Digitized by Google

small tribes, and the destruction of 500,000 men in one battle, were beneath the notice of the author of *Kings*. Since the book of *Chronicles* is anonymous, it can scarcely be considered as the genuine production of any noted man ; and if the author were noted, his notoriety would not be a very enviable one.

§ 120. The book of *Ezra* gives the history of Judah from 536 to 515 B. C. Nehemiah commences his story at 444, and comes down to 404 B. C. The book of *Ezra* is evidently a compilation. The second chapter is occupied with a genealogy which Nehemiah (*VII.* 5) says he found; and that expression means of course that he did not know the author. That portion of *Ezra* between IV. 8 and VI. 18, is in the Jewish Bible written in Chaldaic and not in Hebrew. The book says that Ezra was "a ready Scribe" (*VII.* 6), and it is not to be supposed that an inspired prophet would write thus himself. In the book of *Nehemiah* (*XII.* 1–26) there is a list of priests, down to Jaddua, who who, according to Josephus, lived in the time of Alexander the Great.

§ 121. The author of the book of *Esther* is not mentioned by any authoritative tradition, and, therefore, I cannot argue against its genuineness as the alleged composition of any particular prophet ; but I shall attempt to show that it lacks genuineness as a historical work. It is a fiction throughout. It states (*I.* 4) that Ahasuerus, King of Persia, made a feast unto all his princes and officers, which lasted one hundred and eighty days.* How could the affairs of any government, especially an Oriental despotism,—where so much depends upon the magistrate,—be managed, when, for a whole half year, all these magistrates were assembled at Susa ? It is sometimes said that they went up by turns, each remaining but a short time, and then giving place to new guests. But of such an arrangement the text says nothing.

The king, heated with wine, sends for his queen, Vashti, to appear unveiled before his intoxicated guests. She, very wisely, declines such an invitation. Upon this he issues a decree, apparently dictated at the table, and sends it to all

* Most of this § is taken from Theodore Parker's addition to his translation of De Wette on the Old Testament.

Digitized by Google

the provinces of his kingdom, "that every man shall bear rule in his own house." A king, " merry with wine," might issue such a decree, and this explanation would perhaps suffice, were this the only passage presenting such a difficulty.

Haman, a prince at the court of Ahasuerus, is offended, because Mordecai, a Jew, refuses to do homage to him, and, therefore, scorning to avenge himself on the offender alone, he wishes to satisfy his vengeance, by destroying the whole nation of the Jews. Now, at this time all Judea was a Persian province ; besides Jews were scattered throughout all the other districts, and, therefore, it is a moderate estimate which computes their number at two millions, at that time within the Persian territories. Haman, to avenge himself in this private quarrel, obtains permission to destroy all this great number of people. The king consents that all of them should be massacred in a single day The numerous massacres that defile the page of history naturally recur to the mind. But amongst them all—the Sicilian Vespers, the St. Bartholomew massacre, the horrors of Roman or Arabian butchery, or the atrocities of the French Revolution—there is nothing which approaches the murder of two million human beings in a single day. Nero, wishing all Rome had but one neck, must have shrunk from such a murder as this king is said to command for the sake of avenging a slight insult offered by one person to his Grand Vizier. The ten thousand talents, said to be offered as purchase money for such a body of subjects, only increase the difficulty, by showing the writer was at a loss what motive to ascribe to the king for so unnatural and impolitic an act, and could find none more probable than the love of gold.

The murderous decree is published in all the provinces, "to destroy, to kill and to cause to perish, all Jews both young and old, little children and women, in one day." This is not done hastily, for the time was fixed upon by casting lots a whole year before the deed was designed to be consummated (*III.* 7). No attempt was made to conceal the design from the intended victims. The Jews were aware of the plan, yet neither offered to flee nor to resist with arms. Yet the decree for their total destruction was publicly pro-

Digitized by Google

mulgated in all parts of the kingdom a whole year before the day appointed for the massacre. Is it to be credited that this number of men, enjoying the rights of other subjects of the Persian monarch, and possessed of the warlike spirit of the Jews, would wait tamely to be slaughtered "on a set day" like sheep? An edict so important and unusual must have become known to other historians, but none of them mentions it save Josephus, who evidently draws his information from this book itself.

The account of the Jews killing their enemies on the appointed day is, if possible, still more incredible. One night, as we are told, Ahasuerus, unable to sleep, commanded the chronicles of his kingdom to be read to him. He then learned that Mordecai had formerly done him a good service, previously mentioned in the book, but had received no recompense. Mordecai is rewarded in public. At a banquet, Esther, the queen, and a Jewess, laments to her royal spouse, that her people were all to be cut off. He seems to have been ignorant of her nationality and to have forgotten his decree for the extirpation of the Israelites (*VII.* 5). He finds, what he previously had known, that Haman is at the bottom of the affair, and seeing the gallows erected for Mordecai, says "Hang him [Haman] thereon." The current now sets in favor of the Jews, and on the twenty-third day of the third month, public letters are sent, sealed with the king's ring, "to the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and rulers of the provinces, who are from India to Ethiopia, unto every province, according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews, after their writing, and according to their language." These letters "granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey." They were sent and "published to all people," eight months and twenty days before the decree was to be executed. Wherever the letters came, the "Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day, and many of the people became Jews." It would be supposed the Persians and others likely to be injured by this decree, with

Digitized by Google

so long a time of preparation would prepare means of defense against the Jews, who were a small minority in the whole kingdom. But nothing of this kind takes place. They wait quietly during the eight months, as the Jews had done during the previous three months. On the appointed day, the Jews assemble "to lay their hands on such as sought their hurt," and no man could withstand them. It seems that no attack was made on the Jews and no resistance offered to the massacre which they inflicted on the Persians. Even the magistrates, for fear of Mordecai, who had been elevated to Haman's position, helped the Jews. Upwards of seventy-five thousand Persians were slain in a single day. It is not mentioned that a single Jew fell in the slaughter. Permission is even granted them to continue the murder on the next day, and three hundred are slain at Susa. The Jews celebrated the next day as "a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions to one another." Perhaps no amount of historical evidence would render such a narative credible to an unprejudiced inquirer. How much less is it to be credited, when related by an apocryphal writer, who lived no one knows when, or where, and whose book is encumbered with so many other difficulties! Truly, Ahasuerus was a foolish, but scarcely a blood-thirsty king. The author of *Esther* would not only represent him as eminently stupid and barbarous, but would ascribe first to the Jews and next to the Persians, a tameness of spirit and incapacity of self-defense, "which are not paralled even among the most timid of animals—sheep and doves,—which at least will fly from danger." It is not necessary to mention other less important historical objections.

And this book was received by the ancient Jews as a true history, and for more than two thousand years they have celebrated the Feast of Purim, in the belief that it is a commemoration of that glorious day, when they were not only saved from the murderous decree of Ahasuerus, but were also permitted to massacre all their enemies among the Persians. This fact does not give us a very high opinion of the reliability of Jewish tradition as evidence of the genuineness and authenticity of their Sacred Scriptures.

§ 122. The book of *Job* is by an unknown author. It

Digitized by Google

has been ascribed to Moses, and to Solomon, and to several of the more noted Hebrew prophets, but without any evidence. It is generally agreed now among critics, that the book was written by a Jew, one of whose purposes in writing it, was to oppose the Jewish belief that every man's good or evil fortune in his earthly life, is the reward or punishment of his good or evil deeds. The description in the beginning of *Job*, of the levee day in Heaven, when God and Satan met on the most friendly terms, and agreed to join to tempt and afflict the good man, is very poetic, but not at all consistent with the Mosaic or Christian theology. J. A. Froude says that "The book of Job is evidently not orthodox Jewish in its character. The more it is studied, the more the conclusion forces itself upon us, that let the writer have lived when he would, in his struggle with the central falsehood of his people's creed, he must have divorced himself from them outwardly as well as inwardly: that he travelled away into the world, and lived long, perhaps all his natural life, in exile. Everything about the book speaks of a person who had broken free from the narrow littleness of the 'peculiar people.' The language, we said, is full of strange words. The hero of the poem is of a strange land, a gentile certainly, not a Jew. The life, the manners, the customs are of all varieties and places—Egypt with its rivers and pyramids is there; the description of mining points to Phœnicia; the settled life in cities, the nomad Arabs, the wandering caravans, the heat of the tropics, and the ice of the north, all are foreign to Canaan, speaking of foreign things and foreign people. No mention, or hint of mention, is there throughout the poem, of Jewish traditions or Jewish certainties. We look to find the three friends vindicate themselves, as they so well might have done, by appeals to the fertile annals of Israel—to the flood, to the cities of the plain, to the plagues of Egypt, or to the thunders of Sinai. But of all this there is not a word; they are passed by as if they had no existence; and instead of them, when witnesses are required for the power of God, we have strange un-Hebrew stories of the Eastern astronomic mythology, the old wars of the giants, the imprisoned Orion, the wounded dragon, 'the sweet influence of the seven stars', and the glittering fragments of the sea-

Digitized by Google

snake Rahab, trailing across the northern sky. Again: God is not the God of Israel, but the Father of mankind. We hear nothing of a chosen people, nothing of a special revelation, nothing of peculiar privileges; and in the court of Heaven there is Satan, not the prince of this world and the enemy of God, but the angel of judgment, the accusing spirit, whose mission was to walk to and fro over the earth, and carry up to Heaven an account of the sins of mankind."

§ 123. Isaiah began his vocation as a prophet in 759 B. C., and continued to follow his trade during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, (*I.* 1. *VI*, 1.) The first part of the book known by his name may have been written by him, but the latter part (*XL.–LXVI.*) was certainly not. There is a strong difference of style between the two parts. That portion of the book, supposed to be spurious, has a more flowing, perspicuous and easy style, than the genuine chapters, but it is also weaker and more diffuse. In the spurious chapters Cyrus is mentioned by name, and the writer takes his stand-point in the time of the captivity. He often speaks of the condition of his people under the Babylonian yoke, not as a prophet foretelling a distant future event, but speaking of things happening in his own time. He commences chapter *XL* with foretelling not the captivity, but the deliverance. The Jewish people are "robbed and spoiled," "snared in holes" and "hid in prison-houses." "Who gave Jacob for a spoil?" "Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned?" "Therefore He [Jehovah] hath poured upon him [Jacob] his anger" (*Is. XLII.* 22–25). The oppression of the Assyrians, in the time of the genuine Isaiah is an old affair; "Aforetime * * the Assyrians oppressed them without cause" (*LII.* 4). Cyrus is mentioned by name and styled the Lord's Messiah, who should rebuild the temple. If this be a prophecy, it is very different from all the other prophecies in the Bible. It is in these spurious chapters that the famous prophecies of Jesus are found; but the prophet spoils his prediction by giving the name of Messiah to Cyrus, and by foretelling his career with much more distinctness than that of the Christian Savior. The Pseudo-Isaiah closes his prophecies by exhorting the Jews to maintain their nationality after the return from the

Digitized by Google

captivity, which did not happen until 200 years after the time of the genuine Isaiah.

§ 124. Jeremiah was a prophet from 629 to 588 B. C. (*I.* 2, 3. *XL–XLV*). His book is a confused compilation of prophecies and histories. The last verse of chapter *LI* says "Thus far the words of Jeremiah," and we must conclude that at least the remainder is spurious. Besides chapter *LII* is a mere repetition of the matter of chapters *XXXVII–XXXIX*: and in verse 31 events are related which occurred after Jeremiah's time. In chapter *LI* (15–19) there is a long quotation taken word for word from chapter *X* (12–16). "It is acknowledged," says Bishop Watson in his reply to Paine, "that the order of time [in the book known as *Jeremiah*] is not everywhere observed; the cause of the confusion is not known. Some attribute to Baruch collecting into one volume all the prophecies which Jeremiah had written, and neglecting to put them in their proper places. Others think that the several parts of the work were at first properly arranged, but that through accident or carelessness of transcribers they were deranged."

§ 125. Daniel, the alleged author of the biblical book of that name, was taken by order of Nebuchadnezzar, in the third year of king Jehoiakim (607, B. C.) to be educated at Babylon for a councillor (*Dan. I.* 1, 6): but Jeremiah (*XXV.* 1. *XLVI.* 2) says that Nebuchadnezzar did not come to the throne of Babylon till the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Portion of *Daniel* is written in Hebrew and portion in Chaldee, but the book is supposed to be the work of one author. Daniel is mentioned in terms of praise: he "had understanding in all visions and dreams": "among them all was found none like Daniel": "ten times better than all the scribes"; having "light, and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods": "he was faithful and no error or fault was found in him." There are many reasons for attributing the book to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175, B. C.). It contains a would-be prophetic description of events in the time of Antiochus; which is so very distinct and accurate that it must have been written after the event. Even the dates are given (*VIII.* 14. *IX.* 25. *XII.* 11, 12). The book has

Digitized by Google

a legendary character, being full of improbabilities. "Nebuchadnezzar * demands that the wise men should tell him the dream he had forgotten, and threatened to put them to death in case of their inability to obey his command (*II.* 3). He gives extravagant rewards to Daniel for restoring his lost dream, and explaining it (*II.* 46). He makes an image of gold sixty cubits high, and six cubits in diameter (*III.* 1), [of solid metal apparently !] and commands men to worship it (*III.* 5). He commands the mightiest men in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego [for refusing to worship], and cast them into a furnace, which was so hot as to destroy these mighty men as they cast in their victims (*III.* 22). He blessed the god of these three men, and makes a decree that 'every people, nation, and language', which speaks anything reproachful of this god, 'shall be cut to pieces, and its houses made a dunghill.'" The book was probably written to encourage the Jews to trust in Jehovah, and to hope for the discomfiture of Antiochus. This monarch is represented under the types of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. Antiochus took the sacred vessels of the Jewish worship, polluted the Temple, forbade the Levitical worship, and the observance of the Sabbath, and commanded the Jews to worship at the altar of Jupiter, erected on the high altar of Jehovah. All these facts seem to have been before the mind of the writer of *Daniel* when he composed such a story as should be best fitted to induce the Jews, in the time of Antiochus, to remain true to their faith. He represents those who refused to obey Nebuchadnezzar as being advanced to high honor, and Daniel, himself, when denouncing destruction to Belshazzar, was rewarded by that good-natured monarch. The reason why the book should be ascribed to Daniel, was that he was reputed to have been a great prophet. He is classed with Noah and Job, for righteousness, by Ezekiel (*XIV.* 14, 18, 20), and he had the reputation of having been one of the wisest men of his nation (*Ezek. XXVIII.* 3). It deserves to be noted, however, that if the Daniel mentioned by Ezekiel really was the author of this book, his great fame must have been acquired while he was still young.

* DE WETTE; translated by Theodore Parker.

Digitized by Google

§ 126. There is nothing in the book, known to us as the Gospel of *Matthew*, to indicate who was its author, nor can we derive any information on that point from any other portion of the New Testament, or from authentic history. The general tradition of the church as given by Irenæus, Origen, Epiphanius, Jerome, and Chrysostom (from 178–398 A.D.) relates that Matthew wrote a gospel in Hebrew, for the benefit of the Jewish Christians: and this tradition is the only reason for supposing that Matthew wrote at all, or that our present gospel was written by him.* The origin of this tradition appears to be solely the assertion of Papias (116 A. D.), whose works are lost, but whose statement of the tradition is preserved by Eusebius (315 A. D.). It is supposed that Papias received this tradition from John, an elder of the church at Ephesus. A Hebrew gospel, called sometimes *The Gospel of the Hebrews*, sometimes *The Gospel according to Matthew*, was in circulation among the Jewish Christians, or Ebionites, and was maintained by them to be the only true gospel. Of this Ebionite gospel, no copy has come down to our times, but we know from the writings of the fathers that it differed considerably from our book of *Matthew*; among other differences, the Ebionite gospel had not the account of the divine parentage and miraculous conception of Jesus found in the present Christian gospel. There is reason to believe that there were other great differences, for the Ebionites were esteemed to be deeply heretical in a number of important points of their creed. Jerome obtained a copy of this gospel, and translated it into Greek and Latin at the end of the fourth century; but he nowhere says it is the same as the gospel of *Matthew*, or bears any resemblance to it. Now, we must suppose that the churches, for which Matthew wrote, and in whose language he wrote, would be much more likely to preserve his writings in purity than distant churches of different blood, different languages, and of a creed, which, as we have abundant reason to believe, was not sanctioned by Matthew, or any of the immediate disciples of Jesus. If we conclude that the Ebionite gospel waswritten by Matthew, and that it was more likely to be preserved pure in the Hebrew at Jerusalem, than at Corinth in Greek, then we must suppose

* The greater portion of this paragraph is copied from GREG.

Digitized by Google

that our present Greek *Matthew* is either a different book entirely, or much corrupted. We have no assurance of any kind that the Hebrew *Matthew* was ever translated into Greek, and used in that form as a sacred book ; nor have we any assurance that our *Matthew* ever existed in a Hebrew form ; and if we assume that it was translated, we have no assurance that the translation was faithful to the original. The Hebrew *Matthew* does not now exist, and the original of our *Matthew* is found only in the Greek.

Under this statement of the case, which is entirely correct and fair to the gospel of *Matthew*, there must remain strong doubts of its genuineness. These doubts are confirmed by a consideration of its contents. It lacks the clearness of historical narrative, which an eye-witness, such as the apostle Matthew was, of the adventures of Jesus, would have given. He does not specify places, or dates, or mention the details which are necessary to furnish the idea of a connection of events. There are no incidents of travel. Jesus appears in different places, but we are not informed, how he got from one to the other. We are not told whether he walked, or rode, where he lodged, what he ate, or how he paid his expenses. All that is mentioned of the different places, which he visited, is merely enough to assert that he was there, and then some conversation is related, his words being given at considerable length. I have made the subjoined abstract of all his movements, as recorded by *Matthew* subsequent to the Sermon on the Mount, with which his public ministry began :

He came down from the Mount (*VIII.* 1) ; he entered into Capernaum (5) ; he went into Peter's house (14) ; he crossed the sea of Galilee in a ship (18. 23. 28) ; he went into his own city, going by ship (*IX.* 1) ; "he arose and departed to his house" (7) ; he went forth from thence (9) ; he "sat at meal in the house" (10) ; he went to a "ruler's house" (23) ; he "departed thence" (27) ; "and Jesus went about the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues" (35) ; "he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities" (*XI.* 1.) ; "at that time Jesus went on the sabbath-day through the corn" (*XII.* 1) : "he withdrew himself from thence" (15) : he was in a house (46) ; "the same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the sea-side" (*XIII.* 1) ; "he went into a ship and sat" (2) ; "he departed thence" (53) : he entered "his own country" (54) : he departed "by ship into a desert place"

(*XIV.* 13); "he went up into a mountain to pray" (23): he went across the sea "into the land of Gennesaret" (34); "then Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon" (*XV.* 21); "and Jesus departed from thence and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee" (29); then "Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi," (*XVI.* 13): "and after six days" he went upon a mountain and was transfigured (*XVII.* 1.); and then he came to Capernaum (*XVII.* 24): he departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan" (*XIX.* 1.): "he departed thence" (15); "he went up to Jerusalem" (*XX.* 17), going through Jericho (29): "He entered Jerusalem by way of Bethphage" (*XXI.* 1. 10); he went into the Temple (12); he went "into Bethany and he lodged there" (17); "in the morning he returned to the city" (18): he went to the Temple (23); "he sat upon the Mount of Olives" (*XXIV.* 3); "he was in Bethany" (*XXVI.* 6): he went "into the mount of Olives" (30); and there he was arrested (57).

Such is a complete summary of the history and chronology of Christ's personal movements, as recorded by Matthew. He mentions only one visit to Jerusalem, while John mentions three. (*John II.* 13. *VII.* 10. *X.* 40. *XI.* 17, 18). The few incidents mentioned by the first Evangelist are used for hanging discourses upon—a mere skeleton used to furnish a slight connection between the various sayings of Jesus. The sayings themselves are frequently mere fragments. Take the following instance :—

"And a certain scribe came and said unto him 'Master I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.' And Jesus saith unto him 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." *Mat. VIII.* 19. 20.

Such is the entire history of that conversation, its beginning, end and result. An eye-witness would have added something to make the words of Jesus apply more directly to the case of the Scribe, or would at least have said whether the Scribe did follow Jesus or not. Another reason for believing that the author of *Matthew* was a compiler of traditions, not an eye-witness, is that he repeats four legends, telling the same stories over twice with slight variations: whereas they are mentioned only once by the other Evangelists. Such are the legends of the feeding of the multitude, the cure of the blind man, the demand of a sign, and the accusation of the use of demoniac power in casting out devils. The want of clear conception of the movements of

Digitized by Google

Jesus is evident in every portion of the book; more particularly to any one who will compare the narrative in chapter *VIII* of the *Acts* with chapter *VIII* of *Matthew*, or compare narrative portions generally of the two books. We are told that "the gift* of narrating luminously is a personal qualification of which even an Apostle might be destitute, and which is rarely found among the lower orders of the people." This excuse does not appear to me sufficient to save the genuineness of the book; but if it does, it places divine inspiration in a bad light. It is rather singular that Jehovah should choose such a bungler for an apostle, and afterwards choose him for an evangelist too, knowing him to be wanting in the first qualifications of a historian.

Thus much upon the question whether the apostle Matthew wrote the book ascribed to him: and now a few words upon the date of its composition. Christian authors argue that it was written six or eight years after the crucifixion, but the only testimony which they can produce to sustain that opinion is found in their assumption that the church would not be left a longer time without a written evangel. On the other hand, there is much reason for believing that it was not written for more than thirty years after the death of Jesus. The writer represents his hero as saying, "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by storm" (*Mat. XI.* 12). This is an expression which could not have been used until long after the time of the Baptist, certainly not during his life; and yet, we are told that this language was used before John was slain by Herod (*Mat. XIV.* 10). It is plain in this case that the Evangelist ascribed language to Jesus which he did not use, and that the writer was not an eye-witness. Again, Christ is represented to have spoken as follows:—"Upon you [the Pharisees] may come all the righteous blood shed upon earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the altar" (*Mat. XXIII.* 35). But this Zacharias was slain in 68 A. D., and, therefore, the book must have been written after that time. Josephus (*War, IV.* 4) relates that Zacharias, son of Baruch, an eminent, and very

* KITTO. Cyc. Bib. Lit. Article *Matthew*.

worthy citizen of Jerusalem, was murdered in the Temple, 68 A. D. There is only one other Zacharias mentioned in Jewish history as having been murdered, and he was the son of Jehoiada, and was slain 840 B. C. (2. *Ch. XXIV.*). But Jesus could never have intended to say that no eminent person of great virtue had been slain within 800 years, as he must have been understood, if he had included all the murderous shedding of righteous blood between Abel and Zacharias, the son of Jehoiada. If the Pharisees had been stained with no blood for eight centuries, the Evangelist could scarcely have spoken so indignantly of the conduct of those living in his own time. The Evangelist must have meant the man slain 68 A. D., and he meant probably to convey the idea that Jesus spoke this in the prophetic spirit, which he is represented as showing in a number of other passages.

Matthew represents Jesus as making a number of predictions of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. If we had any satisfactory evidence that these would-be prophecies had been delivered, and recorded before the event, we should wonder at their fulfilment; but without that evidence, we must, in reason, suppose that they were composed after the event, and referred to an earlier time. Thus, Jesus says that one stone of the Temple should not be left upon another (*Mat. XXIV.* 1); that the people should "see the abomination of desolation" (15); that great woe should come upon Jerusalem (16-22); that many false Christs should arise (24); that there should be wars, famines, pestilences; that the Gospel should be preached to all nations (14); and that the believers should be persecuted (9). All these predictions may be said to have been fulfilled between the years 60 and 67 A. D. The Gospel had been preached in many parts of the Roman Empire as early as 65 A. D.; the first persecution was that of Nero in 64; the "abomination of desolation" is understood to have been the attack on the Temple in 66 A. D., by Cestius; there were a great number of pretenders among the Jews about that time, claiming to be the possessors of divine commissions, and Josephus says that they did much harm by stirring the people to rebellion (*War, VII.* 5); the year 66 A. D., according to Tacitus, "so disgraced by crimes,

Digitized by Google

was also marked by the gods with tempests and pestilences ;" Jerusalem was not besieged and destroyed till 70 A. D., but a siege was expected for several years before it occurred ; and reasonable men might well anticipate that when the Roman power was turned against the city, she could not long resist. That the book was written before the destruction of the Holy City, or at least not long after that event, is clear from the fact that the Evangelist expected the second coming of Christ to follow close upon " the tribulation of those days." *Mat. XXIV.* 29.

Such are the internal evidences of the date of the first Evangel. The only external testimony is that of unreliable traditions, which, however, ascribe the book to a late date. Irenæus (175 A. D.) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (394 A. D.) say that Matthew wrote while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, which, according to tradition, was about 64 A. D. ; and Origen (230 A. D.) says that Matthew wrote before Mark, Luke and John.

§ 127. We have no information as to the authorship of the second Evangel, save from tradition, which ascribes it to Mark, who is mentioned a number of times in the New Testament (*Col. VI.* 10 ; *Acts XII.* 12, 25 ; *XIII.* 5, 15 ; *XV.* 37 ; *Philem*, 24). The same tradition says that he was a companion of Peter, and wrote at his dictation, or according to information derived from him. It is not claimed that he was an eye-witness of any of the events in the life of Jesus. Our original copy of *Mark* is in Greek ; but according to tradition, as given by Clement (94 A. D., Eusebius (300 A. D.), Epiphanius (368 A. D.), and Jerome (392 A. D.), it was written in Rome, for the benefit of the Christians residing there ; and a reference to the Roman law of divorce (*Mark*, X. 12), seems to indicate its composition in that place. Nevertheless, the style bears a remarkable resemblance in many points to the Greek of our *Matthew.* Mark evidently used the first Evangel very freely in compiling his book. There is such a similarity between the ideas and the general order of events, and in many places such an exact correspondence between the modes of expression, as could have arisen only in the copying of one from the other, or of both from a more ancient document. Compare the following parallel passages :—

Digitized by Google

"And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishermen. And he saith unto them 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they straightway left their nets and followed him. And going out from thence, he saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, in a ship with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets: and he called them, and they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." *Mat. IV.* 18.

"Now, as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishermen. And Jesus said unto them 'Follow me and I will make you to become fishers of men.' And straightway they forsook their nets and followed him: and when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who also were in the ship, mending their nets. And straightway he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him." *Mark I.* 16.

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom; and he saith unto him, 'Follow me.' And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with him and his disciples." *Mat. IX.* 9.

"As he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alpheus sitting at the Custom House, and said unto him 'Follow me.' And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him." *Mark II.* 14.

"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitude away. And when he had sent the multitude away, he went into a mountain privately to pray." *Mat. XIV.* 22.

"And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go before to the other side, over against Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray." *Mark VI.* 45.

A similar correspondence prevails throughout the book, even in the use of awkward Jewish-Greek phrases.

According to tradition, the gospel of *Mark* was written between 64 and 70 A. D.

§ 128. The third Evangel is ascribed by tradition to Luke (mentioned in *Col. IV.* 14: 2 *Tim. IV.* 11: *Philem.* 24) a physician of Antioch, and the reputed author of the

Digitized by Google

Acts. That he copied from Matthew, or from the same source with him, is certain: but critics are not agreed whether Luke copied from Mark, or Mark from Luke. Compare the following passages:—

"The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and saith unto him 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' Then saith Jesus unto him 'Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." *Mat. IV.* 8–10.

"The devil, taking him up with an high mountain, shewed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.' And Jesus answered and said unto him 'Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.'" *Luke IV.* 5–8.

"Behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him 'See thou tell no man: but go thy way; shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." *Mat. VIII.* 2–4.

"Behold, a man full of leprosy, who, seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' And he put forth his hand and touched him saying 'I will: be thou clean.' And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man; 'but go and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." *Luke V.* 12–14.

"And it came to pass that he went through the cornfields on the Sabbath-day: and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him 'Behold why do they on the Sabbath-day that which is not lawful?' And he said unto them 'Have ye never read what David did,

"And it came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that he went through the cornfields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them 'Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath-days?' And Jesus, answering

when he had need, and was an-hungered, he and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar, the high priest, and did eat the shew broad, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests, and he gave also to them which were with him? And he said unto them 'The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.' *Mat. II.* 23–28.

them, said 'Have ye not read so much as this, what David, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him? How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him, which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? And he said unto them that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath." *Luke IV.* 1–5.

Luke was not a disciple of Jesus, but was a friend of Paul, and according to the tradition mentioned by Irenæus and Origen, wrote the Gospel as preached by the thirteenth apostle, who also expressed his approbation of the book. Tradition also states that the book was written in Greece, after the composition of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

The similarity between the first three Gospels is such, that neither accident nor inspiration is considered sufficient to account for it. Michaelis gives it, as his opinion, that "It is wholly impossible that three historians, who have no connection, either mediate or immediate, with each other, should harmonize as Matthew, Mark and Luke do." Eichhorn supposed that the three copied from an older document, each making such abbreviations, omissions, and alterations as suited him. Previous to the time of Eichhorn, critics generally were disposed to believe that Mark and Luke copied from Matthew. De Wette * thinks that the three reduced to writing the sayings of Jesus as they were preserved in oral tradition. Whatever the truth may be, we may safely assert that all three were written by persons who were not eye-witnesses of the events related, nor inspired with superhuman ability as historians, nor possessed of superhuman knowledge of the life of Jesus.

§ 129. The fourth book of the New Testament claims (*XXI.* 24. *XIX.* 26) the disciple whom Jesus loved for its author: and tradition, of which the earliest record is

* Einleitung in das Neue Testament. § 87.

Digitized by Google

found in Irenæus, A. D. 178, says it was written at Ephesus by the Apostle John, after Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written. Fabricius, Le Clerc, and Hennell think it was written about 97 A. D. According to Hennell, "The first three Gospels agree very well in the style of the discourses attributed to Christ, which were chiefly parables and short pithy sayings. They represent him as beginning his public preaching in Galilee, proceeding after some time to Jerusalem, and suffering there. The chief topic dwelt upon is the approach of the Kingdom of Heaven: and they contain much concerning the fall of Jerusalem. But the Gospel of John is of a very different character. The discourses of Christ are here long controversial orations, without any parables. He is made to journey from Galilee to Jerusalem and back again many times: The kingdom of Heaven is nearly lost sight of, the fall of Jerusalem never alluded to, and we have instead of these several new subjects, viz: —the incarnation of the word or *logos* in the person of Christ; his coming down from Heaven, his relationship to the Father, and the promise of the comforter or Holy Spirit. Also, with a few exceptions, a new set of miracles is attributed to Christ. * * This Gospel appears to be the attempt of a half-educated but zealous follower of Jesus, to engraft his conceptions of the Platonic philosophy upon the original faith of the disciples. The divine wisdom, or *logos*, or light, proceeding from God of which so much had been said in the Alexandrian school, he tells us became a man, or flesh, in the person of Jesus, dwelt for a time on earth, and ascended up where he was before, and where he had been from the beginning, into the bosom of the Father. The title 'Son of God' applied by the Jews to the expected Messiah, but by the Platonists to the world itself, and afterwards to the *logos*, affords him another point of amalgamation; and a term which had been understood by the Jews probably merely in the sense of election or adoption, as in the case of David, is by him put forth as indicating a more sublime and mysterious union. Consequently, this Gospel shows throughout a double or Christian-Platonic object; first, to prove that Jesus is the Christ, which was common to all the apostles, and secondly, that the Christ is the Son of God, or *logos* which de-

Digitized by Google

scended from heaven to give light to men." "In the fifth chapter* of *John* (19–47), a very long discourse of Jesus is connected with a cure wrought by him on the Sabbath. The mode in which Jesus defends the exercise of his healing power on that day, is worthy of notice, as distinguished from that adopted by him in the earlier Gospels. These ascribe to him, in such cases, three arguments—the example of David, who ate the shew-bread, the precedent of the Sabbatical labor of the priests in the Temple, and the course pursued with respect to an ox that falls into a pit or is led out to water. All these arguments are entirely in the practical spirit that characterizes the teaching ascribed to Jesus. But the fourth Evangelist makes him argue from the uninterrupted activity of God, and by the expression 'My Father worketh hitherto,' reminds us of the principle in the Alexandrian metaphysics that 'God never ceases to act;' a doctrine more likely to be familiar to John than to Jesus."

There is a great similarity between the style of the Evangel of *John* and that of the first epistle of *John*, which is also attributed to John the Apostle. Much of John's Evangel is marked by the same fragmentary character which is found in the first three Evangelists, and the want of those details which an eye-witness must have given. He relates chiefly the adventures of Jesus in Judea, while the three confine their attention to what passed in Galilee. Altogether, they are four singular tales to be received in civilized countries as having been written under the influence of Divine wisdom and truth.

There is nothing in the epistles of Paul, some of which were written a quarter of a century after the crucifixion, to show that he knew anything of any Gospels, or expected any to be written. He never mentioned any sacred record of the life of Jesus, or quoted any of his sayings. He ordered the churches which he had established to read his Epistles, and in mentioning them alone, gave his converts to understand that there was no other Christian Gospel in existance. Lardner admits "that in the apostolical epistles of the New Testament" there are "no references to written Gospels or histories of Jesus of Christ." There is

* STRAUSS. Life of Jesus.

Digitized by Google

not any one writer in the New Testament who distinctly recognizes any other as inspired to write the Word of God. The tradition of the church says that St. John approved of the three first Gospels, but he says nothing of them in his Evangel.

CHAPTER XXII.

BOOKS NOT PRESERVED AS WRITTEN.

"Instead of the four Gospels adopted by the church, the heretics produced a multitude of histories in which the actions and discourses of Christ and of his apostles were adapted to their respective tenets."—GIBBON.

"The greatest and most learned doctors of the fourth century were, without exception, disposed to deceive and lie, whenever the interests of religion required it."—MOSHEIM.

§ 130. If the Bible be a revelation from Heaven of truths of the utmost importance to humanity—of truths otherwise unattainable by man—of truths whose reception in purity is the only means of salvation for each individual human being from everlasting torments ; and if ages, remote from the time when these truths were committed to writing, were to have the benefit of that revelation, it should be preserved as written. The same miraculous influence might be expected to be exercised to preserve the book, which was exerted in its composition ; and, without such influence, we could scarcely expect that the Bible has been preserved in purity. If we consider the condition of society, when the books of the Bible were first published, and for many centuries afterwards, the want of printing type, the great labor—even extending throughout a whole year—of making a copy of the Scriptures, the paucity of all kinds of books, the liability of manuscripts to be destroyed, the ignorance of

Digitized by Google

copyists, the strong probability that they would make some errors in copying a long work, the inability of readers to discover errors, and their inability to correct the errors, if discovered,—if we consider all these things, we cannot believe that the Bible has come down to us, word for word, as written, unless it has been protected by some supernatural influence. All the other large books which have been transmitted to us from remote antiquity have been more or less corrupted, either by the ignorance and carelessness of transcribers, or by their intentional alterations. The more important corruptions of the original texts of manuscripts generally originated in intentional alterations. "Such* an arbitrary mode of proceeding with the composition of another, so that it shall pass, thus altered, into circulation, is in our times a thing unheard of and impossible; because it is prevented by the multiplication of printed copies. But it was different before the invention of printing. In transcribing a manuscript the most arbitrary alterations were considered allowable, since they affected only an article of private property, written for one's individual use. But these altered manuscripts being again transcribed, without inquiry whether the manuscript transcribed contained the pure text of the author, altered copies of works thus passed unobserved into circulation. How many manuscripts of the Chronicles of the middle ages, of which several manuscripts are extant, agree with each other in exhibiting the same text, equally copious or equally brief? What numerous complaints do we read in the fathers of the first centuries concerning the arbitrary alterations made in their writings, published but a short time before, by the possessors or transcribers of manuscripts. Scarcely had copies of the letters of Dionysius, of Corinth, begun to circulate, before, as he expressed himself, 'the apostles of Satan filled them with tares,' omitting some things and adding others; and the same fate, according to his testimony, the Holy Scriptures themselves could not escape. If transcribers had not permitted themselves to make the most arbitrary alterations in the writings of others, would it have been as customary as we find it was, for the authors of those times to adjure their readers, at the end of their writings, to make no alter-

* EICHHORN. Translated in Norton, on the Gospels.

Digitized by Google

ations in them, and to denounce the most fearful curses against those who should undertake to do so? The histories of Jesus [and the books of the Old Testament] must also have been subjected to the same mode of treatment," if abandoned to take their chances with mere ordinary human books. And if it appear that the Bible alone has not been in any way corrupted, but still exists in perfect purity as when first composed, we may justly infer that it has been preserved by the care of a Divine Providence, and from the preservation we may argue to its original publication by a Divine Author.

§ 131. There is a strong presumption that the early manuscripts of the Gospels were altered from base motives, to support the doctrines or advance the interests of the forger. The establishment of the early Christian churches was immediately followed by the rise of numerous sects among them, who engaged in the bitterest disputes with each other. They differed as to whether circumcision, sacrifice, the passover, pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and the Sabbath should be observed; whether any but Jews were entitled to salvation; whether matter was eternal; whether Christ was a man or a god, or a union of both; whether Mary was a virgin after giving birth to Jesus; whether God was three or one; whether salvation was obtained by faith, or works, or grace; whether Satan would live forever; whether the world would be burned up in that generation; and a great many similar questions, equally foolish, and equally beyond the possibility of proof; but all raised to a great importance by the popular belief that the rejection of the truth, even in small points of religion, would be punished by everlasting torments in hell. The members of the various sects were ready to resort to any forgery which might serve to give strength to their doctrines. Neander says that "The writings of the so-called apostolic fathers are, alas! come down to us for the most part in a very uncertain condition; partly because, in early times, writings were counterfeited under the names of these venerable men of the church, in order to propagate certain opinions or principles; partly because those writings, which they had really published, were adulterated"; and among these apostolical fathers whose writings have been counterfeited and

Digitized by Google

corrupted, he specially mentions Barnabas and Clement—the former, the companion of Paul, the latter, Bishop of Rome at the end of the first century. Of the latter he says "Under his name we have one epistle to the church of Corinth, and the fragment of another. The first is genuine but is not free from important interpolations. * * * Under the name of this Clement two letters have been preserved in the Syrian churches. * * * These epistles altogether bear the character of having been counterfeited in the latter years of the second or third century."

We soon find in examining the critical works on the Bible that it has not been preserved as written. In the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, one hundred and fifty thousand different readings have been discovered: and there is no standard by which to know the correct one. Most of these variations are mere trifles of the accidental omission or repetition of a letter or word; but no one knows how important some of the other variations may be: no one knows how great the variations are from the original works, all of which are now lost. None of our manuscripts are older than the sixth century. Palfrey says that "An exact undeviating written copy of a composition of considerable length, if we may not call it an impossible achievement, is probably a work of which no example exists." Origen complained that in his time there was much difference between different copies of *Matthew*; and some of the variations he charged to "revisers who strike out or add according to their own judgment." Michaelis says that various readings "which as appears from the quotations of the Fathers, were in the text of the New Testament, are to be found in none of the manuscripts at present existing. Paley declares that the subscriptions of six of Paul's Epistles are spurious; Horne admits that there are "posterior interpolations" in the Bible; most of the Christian commentators on the Bible assert that in a number of passages, the text of the Bible has been corrupted. It is universally admitted among Biblical critics, that verse 7 in 1 *John V* is a forgery, committed to support the doctrine of the Trinitarians: and the word "God" in 1. *Tim. III.* 16 is a fraudulent insertion in place of "which." The last twelve verses of *Mark* as they stand in our English Bibles were

Digitized by Google

not found in most of the copies of *Mark*, three hundred years after Jesus, and we have no evidence that they existed in any previous to 200 A. D. The first and second chapters of *Matthew* were wanting in most of the earliest copies of that book, of which we have any notice, and the third chapter has the appearance of having been intended as the beginning of a book. The ancient Jews had a tradition, that the Mosaic law had been burned at the time of the captivity, and that it had been republished by Ezra: and this tradition was received as trustworthy by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Theodoret and probably by others of the Fathers who have not spoken on the subject. As Dr. Adam Clarke says "All antiquity is nearly unanimous in giving Ezra the honor of collecting the different writings of Moses and the prophets, and reducing them into the form in which they are now found in the Holy Bible." In the Hebrew *Apocrypha*, Esdras says,

"Thy law is burned; therefore no man knoweth the things which thou hast done, or the works that are to begin. But if I have found grace before thee, send down the Holy Spirit into me and I shall write all that hath been done in the world, since the beginning, which were written in thy law, that men may find thy path, and that they which will live in the latter day, may live." 2 *Esdras XIV*. 21.

"And it came to pass that when the forty days were fulfilled, that the highest spake, saying, 'the first, that thou hast written, publish openly that the foolish and unworthy may read it: but keep the seventy last, that thou mayest deliver them only to such as be wise among the people.'" 2 *Es. XIV*. 45.

Many of the Jews, in ancient times, believed that Esdras had re-written the laws as here stated.

§132. Besides, we find that many books referred to in the Bible, are lost—and apparently they were books divinely inspired: for we cannot presume that an inspired prophet would appeal, for support, or refer, for more complete and correct information, to mere human compositions. The following is a list of the Lost Books of Jehovah's Gospel:

1. "It is said in the book of *The Wars of the Lord* what he [Jehovah] did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon." *Num. XXI*. 14.
2. "The sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people

had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of *Jasher*?" *Josh. X.* 13.

"He [David] bade them teach the children the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of *Jasher*." 2 *S. I.* 18.

3. "Samuel told the people the manner [*Constitution*] *of the Kingdom* and wrote it in a book." 1 *S. X.* 25.

4. "He [Solomon] spoke *Three Thousand Proverbs*." 1 *K. IV.* 32.

5. "His [*Solomon's*] *Songs* were a thousand and five." 1 *K. IV.* 32.

6. "He [Solomon in his *Natural History*] spake of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes." 1 *K. IV.* 33.

7. "The rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the *Acts of Solomon*?" 1 *K. XI.* 41.

8. "The rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of *The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel*." 1 *K. XIV.* 19; *XVI.* 5. 20. 27; *XXII.* 39.

9. "The rest of the acts of Abijam and all that he did, are they not written in the book of *The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah*?" 1 *K. XV.* 7.

10. "Neither was the number [of the inhabitants of Judea] put in the account of *The Chronicles of King David*." 1 *Ch. XXVII.* 24.

11. "The acts of David, the king, first and last, behold, they are written * * in *The Book of Nathan*, the prophet." 1 *Ch. XXIX.* 29; 2. *Ch. IX.* 29.

12. "The acts of David, the king, first and last, behold, they are written * * in *The Book of Gad*, the seer." 1 *Ch. XXIX.* 29; 2 *Ch. IX.* 29.

13. "The rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written * * in *The Prophecy of Ahijah*, the Shilonite?" 2 *Ch. IX.* 29.

14. "The rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written * * in the *Visions of Iddo*, the seer?" 2 *Ch. IX.* 29.

15. "The acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in *The Book of Shemaiah*, the prophet?" 2 *Ch. XII.* 15.

16. "His [Manasseh's] prayer also, and how God was entreated of him, and all his sin and his trespass * * * behold, they are written among *The Sayings of Hosea*." 2 *Ch. XXXIII.* 19.

17. "Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and behold, they are written in the *Lamentations*." 2 *Ch. XXXV.* 25.

18. "I [Paul] wrote unto you in an Epistle." 1 *Cor. V.* 9.

Digitized by Google

19. "When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea." *Col. IV.* 16.

20. "Enoch also the seventh from Adam prophecied of these, saying 'Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints." *Jude.* 14.

The book known to us as the *Lamentations* of Jeremiah, does not contain a lament for Josiah, and therefore it is not the book mentioned as No. 17 of the lost books in the above list. From these passages it appears that there are no less than twenty books lost—twenty books written by the inspiration of Jehovah. It's a great waste of inspiration. The book of *Enoch* has been recovered, a copy of it having been found among the Abyssinian Christians within the last hundred years; but it has not been inserted in the Bibles: the time has past for patching up canons of Sacred Scripture among enlightened people.

§ 133. Besides all this, the books, now included in the Bible, were only a few of those published and at one time received as inspired; and the selection of our inspired Gospel for us, and the rejection of the uninspired, all having been previously of equal authority, was made by rules, and for reasons, unknown to us, in a dark age, by men whom we know to have been filled with debasing superstition, and to have been parties to numerous and gross frauds. The selection of the books which now form the New Testament, was made about 300 A. D., in the very atmosphere of priestly fraud, and by men, all of whom, as Mosheim says, "were disposed to deceive and lie, whenever the interests of religion required it"—by men who asserted that they and their brother priests frequently raised the dead, cured the blind and the lame, and cast out devils with miraculous power—by men who introduced image-worship, the invocation of saints, the worship of relics, prayers for the dead, the sign of the cross, the sacraments, the use of consecrated oil, and many other superstitious observances. And all Christendom blindly believes, and we are expected to believe as blindly, that all the books, selected by these men, are inspired, and that all rejected by them, were not inspired! That there were in early times a great many books, not now included in the New

Digitized by Google

Testament, which were received as of divine authority in various Christian churches; and that there were also many other books purporting to be inspired records of Christian doctrine, or of the lives of sacred, characters not received by the churches, is not denied by any Christian author, certainly by none of any learning. Jonathan Edwards speaks of five would-be inspired books mentioned by authors of the second century, four by the authors of the third century, and seventeen by authors of the fourth century, all of which books are now lost, so that we cannot judge of their merits. Besides these, there are many books still in existence, which purport, though they are not recognized by the Christians, to be inspired, and to have been written in the early ages of the Church. All these we must believe to be spurious and false, and all those in the New Testament to be genuine and authentic, under penalty of eternal hell—and all on the faith of the doctors of the fourth century.

"The opinions, or rather the conjectures, of the learned", says Mosheim, "concerning the time when the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, as also about the authors of that collection, are extremely different. This important question is attended with great and almost insuperable difficulties to us in these latter times. It is, however, sufficient for us to know that, before the middle of the second century, the greatest part of the books of the New Testament were read in every Christian society throughout the world, and received as a divine rule of faith and manners. Hence it appears that these sacred writings were carefully separated from several human compositions upon the same subject, either by some of the Apostles themselves, who lived so long, or by their disciples and successors, who were spread abroad through all nations. We are well assured that the four Gospels were collected during the life of St. John [?], and that the three first received the approbation of this divine apostle [?]. And why may we not suppose that the other books of the New Testament were gathered together at the same time? What renders this highly probable [?], is that *the most urgent necessity required its being done.* For not long after Christ's ascension into heaven, several histories of his life

Digitized by Google

and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed by persons, whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance. Nor was this all: productions appeared, which were imposed on the world by fraudulent men as the writings of the holy Apostles. These apocryphal and spurious writings must have produced a sad confusion, and rendered both the history and doctrine of Christ uncertain, had not the rulers of the Church used all possible care in separating the books that were truly apostolical and divine from all that spurious trash, and conveying them down to posterity in one volume." —

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES.

> What, the light of your mind, which is the direct inspiration of the Almighty, pronounces incredible—that in God's name leave uncredited; at your peril do not try believing that."
> CARLYLE.

§ 134. The Bible teaches certain doctrines called "mysteries." A Christian mystery is a dogma, which, no matter how much it may be studied, or how great the genius which studies it, must always remain mysterious, dark to the understanding, unreasonable, anti-reasonable, and absurd. Christians must believe all the mysteries of their creed and and church with the blindest faith; and the merit of their belief is great in proportion to the greatness or absurdity of the mystery. There is no merit in believing propositions proved to be true by abundant evidence; that is something which every worldling may do: but faith—belief without evidence, and contrary to reason—that is the virtue which opens the gates of heaven. Among these mysteries of the

Digitized by Google

Bible are the myth of Adam's Fall, the incarnation of God in a human form, the virginity of Mary after having conceived and given birth to a child, the atonement, and the tri-une nature of the Godhead. These mysteries should not be confounded, as to their nature, with the incomprehensible infinitudes or the unexplained problems of nature. Thus, we all believe in infinite time and space, but these are the necessary counterparts of finite space and time, and we cannot refuse to believe their existence though we do not comprehend them. The mysteries of Christianity do not belong to the same class. They are not the unavoidable correlatives of propositions which all sane men receive. We can reject them without falling into any greater absurdity —without doing any violence to the teaching of our reason or senses. If we receive them, we do so against the authority of the understanding, and deprive ourselves of the only protection against all the absurd and superstitious doctrines which have ever been received among men. If we believe a Christian mystery, why should we not also believe the mysteries offered to us by the Brahmins? When we believe the man who teaches that God is one person, composed of three persons, why shall we not believe another who teaches that each one of the three is again composed of three, and so going on in infinite subdivisions? How are we to distinguish doctrines which appear contrary to reason from those which are false? When I reject a mystery the Christians "call it the dislike of corrupt human nature to the truth; but I shall call it the repulsion of my reason and my natural feelings to their doctrines."*

§ 135. Adam's Fall is the first mystery. Jehovah made Adam perfectly happy and sinless—ignorant even of good and evil—and placed him in paradise, and told him there was but one thing forbidden: which was to eat the fruit of a certain apple-tree. This fruit, very different from any we have now-a-days, gave great knowledge to whoever ate of it—the knowledge of good and evil. There was another tree, the apples of which gave immortality, but of this Adam was not permitted to taste. Why did Jehovah place forbidden fruit within Adam's reach? Why did he draw Adam's attention to it by a special prohibition? Why did

* NORTON.

Digitized by Google

he not place Adam at once in the position where he should remain, without any nonsensical dilly-dallying? His conduct towards Adam cannot be better illustrated than by comparing it to that of "A mother, who knowing certainly that her daughter would lose her virginity at a certain place and time, if solicited by a certain person, should manage the interview, and leave her daughter there unguarded."* The mysterious nature of Adam's Fall is much increased when we remember that not knowing good from evil, he could not have been morally responsible: for such knowledge is indispensable to responsibility. It was not until after he had eaten the apple, not until he had done the deed, that he was able to comprehend the difference between "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." How could he deserve punishment under those circumstances? The whole theory of the punishment and of the sin of Adam assumes that he was no more ignorant or free from sin than we are. "Suppose," says F. W. Newman, "a youth to have been carefully brought up at home, and every temptation kept out of his way; suppose him to have been in appearance virtuous, amiable, religious; suppose farther, that at the age of twenty-one he goes out into the world, and falls into sin by the first temptation; —how will a Calvinistic teacher moralize over such a youth? Will he not say, 'Behold a proof of the essential depravity of human nature! See the affinity of man for sin! How fair and deceptive was this young man's virtue, while he was sheltered from temptation; but, oh! how rotten has it proved itself!' Undoubtedly, the Calvinist would and must so moralize. But it struck me, that if I substituted the name of Adam for the youth, the argument proved the primitive corruption of Adam's nature. Adam fell by the first temptation; what greater proof of a fallen nature have I ever given? or was it possible for any one to give? I was surprised to find that there was an *a priori* impossibility of fixing on myself the imputation of degeneracy, without fixing the same on Adam." And if Adam sinned, why should his children be punished for his deed? There is something exceedingly mysterious in the nature of the punishment inflicted on Adam and all his descendants—the ir-

* BAYLE.

resistable propensity to sin*—an irresistable impulse to repeat the act which was prohibited to Adam, and for which he was punished—and this sin subject again to punishment of infinite pains in eternal hell. The justice of Jehovah, as shown in this matter, is of a very queer kind: it has for its object "neither† the reform of the offender, nor the warning of others, nor the reparation of the evil done." According to the Rev. Edward Beecher,‡ "It has been conceded repeatedly that the acts ascribed to God [Jehovah] in his dealings with the human race through Adam do *appear* dishonorable and unjust, according to any principles of equity and honor which God has made the human mind to form." If a thing *appear* unjust after a fair examination of it, is it not unjust? What is the difference between appearing and being? And yet the writer of that sentence and all his school say that God is perfectly good and just, notwithstanding his actions are in direct opposition to our definitions of goodness and justice. Let us recall the punishments inflicted for the eating of that apple by a man who did not know what he was doing. *First*, Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise; *Secondly*, Adam was condemned to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; *Thirdly*, Eve was condemned to bear children in pain; *Fourthly*, the ground was cursed for their sakes, and ordered to produce thorns and thistles; *Fifthly*, They were all made unhappy; *Sixthly*, They were made sinful; *Seventhly*, Their sinfulness was punished with eternal pains in hell; *Eighthly*, A few of them were told that they might be saved from those pains if they would believe that the God who had treated them in this manner was the perfection of justice. Adam paid a high price for that apple; and Diderot is sensible when he comes to the conclusion that Jehovah cares a great deal more for his apples than he does for his children.

As to the questions why the sending of the Savior was postponed to so late a date; why the knowledge of his doctrines is confined to a small portion of mankind; why nine-tenths of those who believe his doctrines, ground their faith not on reason but on ignorance, tradition and superstition;

* STRAUSS.
† LEIBNITZ.
‡ Conflict of Ages. Ch. XVII.

Digitized by Google

why salvation is made to depend on, faith while faith had nothing to do with the fall; why Christ's blood would not suffice to atone unconditionally and entirely for Adams sin; and whether Abraham and his descendants previous to the time of Jesus were saved from eternal hell, there having been no promise to that effect—these are questions which the Bible does not answer expressly or by implication: but they are questions which sensible men should ask, if they believe in the Jehovistic book-revelation.

§ 136. The virginity of Mary, after having conceived and given birth to a child, is exceedingly mysterious. We can safely believe that such an event never happened to more than one woman in the world, though it has been related of a great many. Virgins do not bear children now-a-days. The times are too degenerate. But the Christians say that there is doubt of Mary's maidenhood. It seems that there was a peculiar virtue in that condition which made it a fit medium for a God to pass through; at least much importance was attached to it; though we cannot learn what that virtue was. "One of the most subtle disputants of the Manichean school, has pressed the danger and indecency of supposing that the God of the Christian, in the state of a human fœtus, emerged at the end of nine months from a female womb. The pious horror of his antagonists provoked them to disclaim all sensuous circumstances of conception and delivery; to maintain that the divinity passed through Mary like a sunbeam through a plate of glass; and to assert that the seal of her virginity remained unbroken even at the moment when she became the mother of Christ."*

§ 137. The incarnation is perhaps the greatest of all the Biblical mysteries. It is the union, the intimate and harmonious mixture, the imprisonment, in a few cubic inches, of flesh and blood, of the divine and the human, the finite and the infinite. Jesus was both perfect and imperfect at ...e same time, sinful and sinless. And he was not a whole ... but only one-third of one. God is divided into three ...s, and one portion of the Trinity (which cannot well be ...idered separate from the incarnation) was imprisoned ...esus. He was conceived by a marriageable woman, who

...BBON.

was distinguished in no natural and important point from other women of her age and country. He was carried in the womb and born and bred like other children. He was possessed of a body of real flesh and blood, he was subject to animal wants and desires, and he was fed upon the ordinary food of men. He was circumcised, and he grew in form and sprit to be a man (*Luke II.* 40 ; *Mat. XI.* 19). He was bred to the trade of a carpenter (*Mark VI.* 3), and he was supposed by his acquaintances to be the son of Joseph (*Luke II* 41, 48 ; *IV.* 22), and to be a man like other men. He made no claim to be anything more till he was thirty years of age (*Luke III.* 23 ; *IV.* 24 ; *Mat. XIII.* 54 ; *Mark VI.* 1 ; *John VI.* 42) ; nor did he, previous to that time, utter a sentence worthy of record. On one occasion his relatives thought him to be crazy (*Mark II.* 21, 31.). At the age of thirty he proclaimed himself a prophet, but found so little faith at home that he declared "a prophet is not without honor but in his own country, *and among his own kin, and in his own house*" (*Mark VI.* 4 : *Mat. XIII.* 57 ; *John IV.* 44). He was then looked upon at home as an impostor! Not even his own brothers believed on him (*John VII.* 5) ; and they appear to have cared but little about him, for they are not mentioned as having been present at his seizure, trial, execution, or resurrection. After his mother had given birth to the Creator of the universe, she yielded to the embraces of a man and had children—merely human sons and daughters (*Mat. I.* 25 ; *XII.* 16 : *XIII.* 55 ; *Luke VIII.* 19 ; *John II.* 12 ; *Acts I.* 14). After teaching three years, and before he had committed his doctrine to writing, Jesus was arrested on a charge of sedition, tried and executed ; and he, God, died in the midst of great torments. Verily, as Paul says, such things are "foolishness to the natural man."

§ 138. Another Biblical mystery is the atonement Jesus Christ, one third of God, came to earth to teach pure religion, and while so teaching, was arrested on a charge of crime, and crucified. By being crucified, he atoned for Adam's sin, but only partially. His coming was to be of no benefit to those who died before he came, or to those who should live after his coming without knowing his doctrine, or to those who should know his doctrine without

Digitized by Google

believing it. Many men had died before the time of Jesus; but their deaths had done no good : many men had prayed for divine favor, but they could not be saved : Jesus alone could save them. But what was the virtue in his blood? Did his divine nature suffer? Is Godhood subject of suffering? Could he not by virtue of his omnipotence save men as well without going through the ceremony of crucifixion, as with it? Did the suffering of human nature expiate Adam's sin? If so, why might not the blood of thousands of martyrs before the time of Jesus have sufficed to wipe out the dread offense of eating an apple? Why was it necessary that the Messiah should be a Jew? Why was it necessary that he should be a descendant of David? Why might not the blood of bulls and goats have sufficed to wash out the sin of Adam? Am I under obligation to adopt the Christian doctrine in regard to all these questions, without being able to think of a solitary argument in their favor?

If Jehovah, of whom Jesus is part, be the creator and governor of the universe, the great first cause of all existence and events, it appears that this "grand catastrophe of our religion is a most illustrious suicide." * It is the complicated case of God killing himself to appease himself: entirely outdoing the man, who bit off his own nose to spite his face. Or, if it be not a case of suicide, but a sacrifice by one God, Jehovah, of his dearly beloved son, Jesus, another God, then it is a deicide : and this appears scarcely less absurd. "Let us suppose," says Bolingbroke, "a great prince governing a wicked and rebellious people. He has it in his power to punish, but thinks fit to pardon them. But he orders his only and well beloved son to be put to death to expiate their sins, and satisfy his royal vengeance. Would this proceeding appear to the eye of reason, and in the unprejudiced light of nature, wise, just, or good?" "Whence † could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who has millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because they say one man and one woman had eaten an apple? And on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation

* BENTHAM.
† PAINE.

Digitized by Google

had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world in an endless succession of deaths with scarcely a momentary interval of life."

§ 139. Another great mystery of Christianity is the "Trinity." It is worthy of note, however, that that word is not to be found in the Bible, the writers of which, as it seems, did not know their own meaning. There are three gods, Jehovah, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost, and there is only one God, the Lord. It is inconceivable how a God can be one and three at the same time. Fichte thinks that a picture in an old Dresden hymn-book gives a very good idea of the Trinity which is represented as an old man, a young man, and a dove. Perhaps, another illustration of the Trinity might be found in Cerberus, the dog, with one body and three heads, which guarded the entrance of hell, taking care that of those who should go in, none should come out. Not that the Christian Cerberus in person watches at the gates of hell: that would be beneath his dignity: he has a proxy to attend to that duty.

Tertullian, the great leader of the Christian Church of the West, in the fourth century, appears to have had a very clear idea of the nature of the mysteries, and to have understood fully the increasing merit of belief in proportion to the absurdity of the dogma. He wrote "The son of God was crucified; it is no shame to own it because it is a thing to be ashamed of. The son of God died; it is wholly credible because it is absurd. When buried, he rose again to life; it is certain because it is impossible."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE EVILS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Lactantius [300. A. D.] "seemed firmly to expect and almost ventured to promise that the establishment of Christianity would restore the innocence and felicity of the primitive age; that the worship of the true God would extinguish war and dissension among those who mutually considered themselves as the children of a common parent; that every impure desire, every angry and selfish passion would be restrained by the gospel; and that the magistrates might sheath the sword of justice among people who would be universally actuated by the sentiments of truth and piety, of equity and moderation, of harmony and universal love." GIBBON.

It is idle, it is disingenuous to deny or to dissemble the early *depravity* of Christianity, its gradual but rapid departure from its primitive simplicity and purity, still more from its spirit of universal love." MILMAN.

'Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an All-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: Omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates to this age to have been utterly unsuccessful." SHELLEY. 1820 A. D.

§ 140. The Christians appeal for the truth of the Bible to the alleged beneficent effects which follow its reception and the evils which follow its rejection. Now I do not admit that any amount of beneficent influence will prove a dogma, nor would any evil consequence destroy any truth. Truth appeals to reason, not to the sense of pleasure. And yet it seems reasonable to expect that if a revelation were sent from heaven to serve as a guide for men in the conduct of life, it must, of necessity, be productive of some practical benefit, and indeed of benefit greater than could be derived from any mere human teaching. Such benefits have arisen from Christianity, as its advocates assert. They say that civilization and morality have kept equal pace with knowl-

Digitized by Google

edge of, and faith in, the Bible. Its truths and promises, the hopes of heaven and the fears of hell, have a great and unequalled power in rendering man moral, aiding him to subdue his baser passions, inclining him to justice and morality, and enabling him to free himself from idol-worship, debasing superstitions, and vile propensities. Only among Christians have the arts and sciences reached their highest development; only the influence of the Bible has been able to break down the barbarous customs of ancient times, which considered every stranger an enemy, and might equivalent to right. On the other hand, wherever Christianity has not prevailed, there public and private morality have been at a low ebb, the arts of civilized life have languished, political liberty has disappeared or remained unknown, and its place has been occupied by despotism or anarchy.

Illustrations in support of these assertions are not wanting. The Jews were the only people of antiquity who were not worshippers of idols and who possessed an exalted idea of the Deity, and a high morality. The Greeks and Romans of that early time were polytheists and idol-worshippers, and they represented their divinities as possessed of the most debased characters. The most disgusting vices were then publicly practised, almost without reproach, by the most prominent and influential men. In our own day, the Bible is better known in England and America than in any other lands, and there accordingly are found governments more free, arts more flourishing, and people more moral than in any other lands. Germany and France, where the Bible is less known, are not so prosperous, yet they are far in advance of all the pagan nations and of Catholic countries, where the people are forbidden to read the Bible, and where the popular faith is loaded down with a multitude of superstitions. Sweden and Denmark are Protestant countries, and the people are moral. Italy and Spain are Catholic, and the people are ignorant and debased. And yet the Turks are a grade lower in civilization, being farther removed from the truths of Christianity, and still beyond them are the Chinese and Hindoos, and in the lowest grade of ignorance and debasement are the idolaters of Africa and the Polynesian Islands. But there is a fearful state to which the superstitious and untaught idolator never

Digitized by Google

reaches, the condition of perfect lawlessness and immorality, the unbridled reign of all that is basest in man's nature, when a nation educated in the truths of Christianity, casts them off and rushes into the arms of atheism. Such was France in 1793, drunk on blood to vomit crime, the horriblest of horrors, a great nation of divine intelligence, struck with atheistic frenzy, denying the distinction between virtue and vice, sending all their best men to the guillotine, elevating their meanest to the summit of power, and hurling public order, religion, and morality into one general ruin.

There are several complete answers to all this : *first*, civilization and belief in the Bible do not keep equal pace ; *secondly*, if they did, there is no proof that the former is the effect of the latter ; and *thirdly*, there is strong evidence to show that high enlightenment is generally followed by disbelief in the Bible.

§ 141. Let us see whether Jews and Christians in ancient and modern times have been much superior to the Gentiles and Skeptics? And first for a comparison between the Jews and Greeks—nations which existed about the same time, and between which, partial comparisons have frequently been drawn by Christian writers. All, or nearly all, that we know of these nations, is derived from their own books, and on the first examination of these, a notable difference is perceptible. The Hebrew books are all religious in their character, while the writings of the Greeks are upon all branches of history, philosophy, the fine arts, and the natural sciences. This difference is to be accounted for, partly at least, by the fact that the Jews were a priest-ridden nation ; all their books were written by priests ; all their learning was monopolized by priests ; all their opinions were derived from the priests ; and it may well be supposed that a hereditary, despotic, superstitious, and corrupt priesthood, would tolerate no light literature. Greece on the other hand, had no hereditary, powerful or organized priesthood. Many of the citizens unconnected with the priesthood, such as it was, were as well educated as the priests themselves, could write books as well, and could publish with perfect freedom. Indeed, we may say that Greece had no ecclesiastical literature. But not-

Digitized by Google

withstanding the very different media, through which we see the two nations, I think we may safely assert, that the Greeks were the nobler and more moral people, as they certainly were the more intellectual.

We have seen (*Ch. VII.*) that previous to the Babylonian captivity, the Jews, as a people, were Polythiests and idolaters, and, according to the declaration of Ezekiel, more immoral than the people of Sodom had ever been. We know also that they were a rude, bloodthirsty, revengeful tribe, harsh towards one another and illiberal and unfriendly towards strangers. While in captivity they became familiar with Zoroastrianism, which, as understood by the Parsees generally, taught the existence of only two divinities, who corresponded to the later Jewish conceptions of Jehovah and Satan. The Jews never were pure Monotheists, for the devil and the angels are only other names for the inferior divinities: and in their approaches to the belief in one sole divine being, they were only the copyists of the Zoroastrians. Undoubtedly their conception of the Divine Nature was superior to that of any other people, except the Parsees: but that alone could not compensate for a vast number of other points in which they were inferior to the Greeks. The Hebrew government was one of the most despotic and debasing which ever existed. A hereditary priesthood, with such influence as the Levites possessed, must necessarily keep any nation at a low state of civilisation. The system of castes is said by all philosophers, who have observed its influence, to be the most damnable invention of tyranny and priestly fraud. It destroys all sense of human equality and dignity, and makes the many to be the abject slaves of the few.

The ancient Jews did nothing for our benefit. They left us no liberal or well-digested laws, no valuable essays on political, moral, social, or religious philosophy, no able historical works, no grammar, no logic, no rhetoric, no great orations, no epics, no tragedies, no comedies, no mathematics, no astronomy, no geography, no mechanical inventions, no great architectural monuments, no statues, no pictures, not even the glory of a great empire. All the peculiar favor of Jehovah, all the miracles, all the prophets with their revelations from heaven did not enable the Jews to rival the un-

Digitized by Google

assisted human energy and ability of neighboring heathen nations. Voltaire remarks: "Moses changes his ring, before the king, into a serpent, and all the waters of the kingdom into blood; he creates toads which cover the earth; he changes the dust into lice; he fills the air with winged poisonous insects; he strikes all the men and all the animals of the land with frightful ulcers; he calls down storms, hail, and thunder-bolts to ruin the country; he covers it with grasshoppers; he plunges it into the deepest night for three successive days; he cuts off the first-born of animals and men, beginning with the heir of the throne; he passes dry-shod over the bed of the Red Sea, while the waters stand heaped up in mountains on either hand, and after his passage they rush down and overwhelm the army of Pharoah. After reading all these miracles the thinking man says 'Surely the nation for which and by which all such wonders are done, is destined to be the master of the universe!' But no! They end by suffering famine and misery in arid sands, and after prodigy upon prodigy, they all die before seeing the little corner of earth where their descendants were established for a few years."

The Greeks were far less numerous than the descendants of Jacob (if the numbers given by Moses be correct), and yet how much do we not owe to Greek civilization? It might almost be said that we owe everything to them. "The beginnings of all our intellectual civilization, of our poetry, music, history, oratory, sculpture, painting, and architecture, of our logical, metaphysical, ethical, political, mathematical and physical science, and of our free political institutions must be traced to the Greeks. They are pre-eminently the aristocracy of the human race. No other nation can ever do for mankind what they did. They found the world immersed in all the darkness of the oriental form of society [such as prevailed among the Jews whose political and social institutions were formed by Jehovah]. Despotic governments enforcing abject submission to the sovereign, and a prohibition of open discussion in assemblies of chiefs or counsellors; exclusive [and hereditary] priesthoods predominating over the people; in private life, polygamy, cruel punishments, and bodily mutilations; art massive, shapeless and grotesque; the absence of all literature wor-

Digitized by Google

thy of the name; no science, no oratory, no drama; no history beyond a meagre chronicle of the genealogies and acts of the kings;—such was the state of the most civilized portion of mankind when the influence of the Greek genius began to operate upon the inert mass. It was this which first infused a soul into a lifeless body—it was the Greek Prometheus who stole from heaven the fire which illuminated and warmed these benighted races; and it was under its excitement that they made the first great step out of the stationary into the progressive state; that step of which all experience proves the extreme difficulty, even where there is a model at hand to work upon." Not only did the Greeks lay the foundations of all our present intellectual culture, but they carried many of the highest branches of the arts to an excellence which all the millions of Christian European blood—fifty times more numerous than the Greek kindred—have been unable to surpass—scarcely able to equal. England, Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal have produced their epic poems, but the Iliad is the greatest of them all. Pindar's heroic odes are the models in their kind. The orations of Demosthenes are superior to the greatest efforts of all later orators. The scanty remnants of ancient Grecian sculpture—many of them mere mutilated fragments—have maintained their preëminence of merit in spite of all the genius and labor of modern statuaries. Architects of the present day have scarcely a hope to surpass the buildings or improve upon the proportions of Athenian architecture. And although the existing remains of Grecian painting, as at Pompeii, are almost destroyed, and could never have been considered to belong to the higher works in that art, yet it is the opinion of most modern artists who have examined the matter, and, among others, of Raphael Mengs, himself a distinguished painter as well as an able writer, that the pictures of Athens and Rome were as excellent in their kind as are the Venus de Medicis, the Apollo Belvidere, the Laocoön, the Dying Gladiator, and the friezes of the Parthenon in sculpture.

But the Christians delight to dwell upon the moral purity and devout spirit of the Jews as compared with the Greeks. The latter people, and even their most famous and reputable men, were in the daily and notorious practice of

Digitized by Google

debasing vices: and their ordinary conversation, and the common pictures and ornaments in their houses were filled with figures suggesting obscene and disgusting ideas. That the Greeks were different from us in their notions of decency and propriety, is true; but whether they were more coarse and debased than the Jews, is exceedingly doubtful. There is much to testify against the Greeks—their houses, pictures, statuary, household utensils, and books written by uncensured scribblers; but there is no such testimony against the Jews, who have left nothing save sermons and annals written by slavish Levites. But even in those sermons and annals, I cannot discover that the Jews had a high morality. The moral standard of their best men never rose to the level of the Grecian philosophers. Judea was remarkably barren of good and great men. The character of Job commands respect, but he is not said to have been a descendant of Abraham. Of the other Biblical heroes, the best are those of whom the least is said. David and Solomon, to whom more space is given in the sacred records than to any other men, were stained with almost every crime. We seek in vain through the whole Bible for characters—for even one character—which may serve as a reasonable approximation to our modern ideal of a high moral nature. According to the sacred records, Israel never had any such men. But among the Greeks there were, in proportion to the total number of their people, multitudes of characters to which we cannot refuse our heartiest admiration—men in whom "greatness of mind seems but second to greatness of virtue" *—men whose moral nobility is unsurpassed in our own times—men whose glorious deeds makes the blood of every student of Grecian history tingle with enthusiastic admiration for them as he reads of their deeds. No prominent man has risen in modern Europe to emulate Timoleon; † America produced a rival, but no superior in Washington. The unparallelled self-sacrifice of Leonidas and his band, the devotion of Socrates to intellectual freedom, and Aristides' exalted purity and sense of justice, must remain as ideal models to all generations of

* JOHN FOSTER. Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion.
† See the history of Timoleon in Grote's Greece.

Digitized by Google

men. The human mind can scarcely conceive a more loveable character than that of Epaminondas. Besides these, there are Solon, Pericles, Pelopidas, Brasidas, Phocion, Anaxagoras, Plato, Democritus, Zeno, Aristotle, and Dion —all of them men whose moral natures were unequalled by any of the priests or kings of Israel.

The French Revolution is the great and favorite bugbear with which to scare the young and ignorant from the horrors of thinking for themselves, used by Robert Hall and others of the hell-worshipping school, who say that but for the fear of punishment in a future state, any man would be a fool, if he should practise love and justice toward his neighbors. The destruction of a few thousand lives is magnified into a monstrous evil as though it had no parallel in the annals of Christian persecution and civil war. The unmeaning worship of the Goddess of Reason maintained for a few days by a few hundred persons, is spoken of as the greatest offense ever committed against society and religion, while the worship of images, relics, saints, and priests, which had debased and degraded millions through many centuries is prudently kept in the background, or referred to as a matter of little importance. The French Revolution, deplorable as were some of its excesses, was yet all in all, a glorious and beneficent event, and its blessings may be accounted as cheaply purchased. The atrocities which accompanied it, were owing chiefly to the ignorance and superstition in which Christian priests and Christian kings had kept the people, to put an end to which was a main purpose of those who brought on the revolution, and in which purpose they succeeded. There is no evidence to show that the crimes of the mob were caused in any respect by their atheistic belief, while there is much to show the evil influence of the general popular ignorance.

§ 142. The assertion that at the present time morality, popular enlightenment, and national prosperity are dependent on, or may be measured by faith in the Bible, is notoriously untrue. The very nations which are cited as proof of the truth of the assertion, are proof of the contrary. England, America, France, and Germany, far from being more Christian than Italy, Spain, Sweden, or Mexico, are vastly more skeptical in proportion to their population :

Digitized by Google

and it would be far more true, to say that enlightenment keeps step with freethought, than with Christian faith.

Christianity as a human institution, compared with other forms of faith of man's invention, has led to very considerable benefits, which however become trifles, and unworthy of notice, if we compare them with what they should be, were it a revelation given by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness. It has not only permitted the existence ef war, tyranny, superstition, bigotry, and intolerance, but it has nourished them to a higher development than they ever rose to under any other system. No system, political, religious or social, has been the occasion of so much bloodshed, and so much malicious and bitter hatred among men as the Christian religion. The history of the wars and prosecutions of Christians against Christians, is the blackest and bloodest portion of the records of humanity. All such results should have been prevented by the prevalence of a religion, contrived by an all-wise Designer to confer the greatest possible benefits on mankind: and something of this kind, it seems, the too enthusiastic Lactantius really hoped for, when Christianity was at last adopted by the emperor of the Roman world. But his hopes were vain. His religion bred hate and war where none was known before. It abolished the old polytheism and idol-worship to adopt others, little better in their places. It found southern Europe in the possession of a considerable degree of civilization, but was unable to preserve it; and from the time of the adoption of the new doctrine, as the religion of the Empire, until 1100 A. D., Egypt, Greece, and Italy were sunk far deeper in ignorance, superstition, and immorality than they had been at any time in a thousand years before. For six centuries the Saracens of Spain were the most enlightened, and probably the most moral people of Europe: and Christendom did not begin to awaken to modern civilization till the study of the ancient languages, on the Revival of Learning, opened the minds of scholars to the treasures of the heathen literature of Athens and Rome. The manuscripts of pagan philosophers left the Bible far behind in their influence. With civilization came industrial, social, religious, and political progress, which occurred within the domains of Christianity, but was

Digitized by Google

owing to it, much less than to the inborn intellectuality of the Saxon, Frank, and Gothic races. Woman was treated with consideration, but no more than she had always received among the Teutonic nations. Political and social slavery was abolished to some extent, because the priesthood had a pecuniary interest in securing a certain degree of freedom for the common people, and still more because, in the course of events, the people became so strong, that they were able to take some of their rights. Polygamy and concubinage became rare, but these had been prohibited by public opinion, or the laws, in Greece and Rome before the time of Jesus. The Bible was a very bendable book : the Church possessed a large number of priests : many of them were learned and good men : they twisted their gospel to suit the demands of modern progress, and the great extent of their faith secured to them a wide hearing and a great influence. The common people, had a thorough though a superstitious conviction of the truth of their faith : and their zeal in observing its dictates was heightened by the fear of the eternal hell-prison-house, which their savior had prepared for those who should see fit to try to enter heaven by some other door than his. Jesus on earth had ordered men to be charitable: and accordingly Christians were "charitable;" that is to say they robbed the poor of their rights and gave them pennies. This charity increased wonderfully when the believers found themselves on their death-beds, and they could hear the roaring of the flames in the pit of destruction. Great and admirable institutions for the ill and the poor, were founded, and self-denying monkish corporations were formed to devote all their attention to deeds of love. Much of this was owing to the influence of superstitious terror : much of it to the pure benevolence, which has its inexhaustible source in the human soul. A religion so nearly universal as Christianity and accepted by nations so enlightened and powerful as those of Europe, would have to be indeed vile, if it should not produce very great benefits. The New Testament doctrine, that all men are equal before God, was the cause of much good, not because it was new, for it was not, having been substantially received in Boodhism, Druidism and the mythology of Greece and Rome, but because under the Christian reign

Digitized by Google

of Terror, the people were more disposed to practice upon the theory. The Church was rich and it patronized the arts. The priests were numerous : they cultivated learning and educated the people. The church members met on Sunday to hear the "Word of God;" they learned to know and to appreciate each other. Rich and poor could meet there more nearly on an equality than in any other place on earth. The priests was often sprung from the lower classes and he could not avoid sympathizing with them. The priests keeping up a constant communication between the different parts of the world, aided much to spread and increase the blessings of civilization. Such I understand the benefits of Christianity to be—no more. Many of these benefits are not owing at all to the essence of Christianity but merely to its accidents, and others do it little honor ; while none furnish evidence of any superhuman origin for it. That it has been extravagantly praised, we all know, but this is a natural consequence of its prevalence. I shall now mention some of the evils for which we are indebted to belief in the Bible.

If the faith of Jesus were a great blessing to humanity, we might expect to find the strongest evidence of its benefits among the priesthood who are called to study the Word of God continually, and who are ordained under divine authority to serve as teachers and guides to mankind. But if there be any one class in Christendom which can be looked upon, more than any other, as the practisers and defenders of superstition and tyranny, that class is certainly the Christian clergy. In England, in Italy, in Spain, and in Mexico the stall-fed ministers of Jehovah are the scourges of the people ; and if they could be swept away in a revolution, a few thousand lives would be a small consideration in comparison —particularly if they were the lives of those who resist the grant of popular liberty and education. I rejoice in the hope of that revolution—without blood, if possible—but the revolution ! Human rights are cheap at any cost of tyrants' blood, and if the people see fit to spill their blood in their own defense, no one has a right to complain.

Priestcraft in all ages and nations has been the same. "Such* is the knavery and such the folly of mankind, that no example, ancient or modern, Pagan or Christian, can be

* BOLINGBROKE.

Digitized by Google

produced of an organized priesthood that, once established, have not aimed at acquiring from their institution, and that have not acquired, sooner or later, exorbitant wealth and immoderate power." The nature of the Christian clergy is essentially evil ;* its object is self-gratification and self-aggrandizement ; the means which it uses are the basest frauds and the most shameless delusions practised on the popular mind for the acquisition of power ; and that power once gained, it is exercised in the most fierce and bloody manner to render it at once awful and perpetual. Nothing has been so servilely mean when weak; when strong, nothing so daring in assumption, so arrogant in command,—earth, heaven, the very throne and existence of God himself being used as the tools of its designs, and appealed to with horrible impudence in the most shameless of its lies. Professing itself merciful, nothing on this earth, which is by no means wanting in scenes of terror, has ever exhibited itself in shapes of equal cruelty—cruelty, selfish and impassible : claiming sanctity as its peculiar attribute, nothing has been so grossly debauched and licentious ; assuming the men of humility, nothing is so impiously proud, so offensively insolent ; proclaiming to others the utter vanity of worldly goods, its cupidity is insatiable of worldly honors, its ambition is boundless ; affecting peace and purity, it has perpetrated the most savage wars, in the very name of Heaven, and spread far and wide the contagion of sensuality ; in Europe, usurping the chair of knowledge, the office of proclaiming a religion which is offered as the greatest wealth of humanity, it has locked up the human mind for more than a thousand years in the dens of ignorance ; mocked it with the vilest baubles, the most imbecile legends ; made it a prey to all the restless and savage passions of an uncultivated and daily irritated soul, robbed it of its highest joys in the exercise of a perfected intellect and a benevolent spirit, and finally, by its tyrannies, its childish puerilities, its insane pomps, and most ludicrous dogmas, overwhelmed the people, wherever it had power, with an iron bigotry and degrading superstition.

"I am aware," says Channing, "that I shall be told that Christianity, judged by its history, has no claim to the

† The remainder of this paragraph is altered from WM. HOWITT History of Priestcraft.

honorable title of a religion of liberty. I shall be told that no system of heathenism ever weighed more oppressively on men's souls; that the Christian ministry has trained tyrants who have tortured now the body with material fire, and now the mind with the dread of fiercer flames, and who have proscribed and punished free thought and free speech as the worst of crimes;" and he prays that Christianity shall not be held "to answer for it," because "Christianity gives its ministers no such power." But Christianity does give its ministers such power; just as much as any prevalent system gives the power by which its agents do evil. All the intolerance, all the superstition, all the tyranny, all the wars, and all the inquisitions which the Christian clergy in this age maintain, are fully justified by the examples of those Jewish priests who acted under the immediate inspiration of Jehovah—all have their sanction in that Bible which is held out as "The Word of God."

§ 143. The character and actions ascribed to God are such, that his worshippers must rejoice in the damnation of nine-tenths of the human race. I have already quoted (§ 48) some passages from Jonathan Edwards, Massillon and Tertullian (some of the greatest men of the Christian Church), showing their sentiments upon the proportionate number of the elect, the nature of future punishment, and the manner in which faithful Christians should look upon the miseries of the damned. Since the spirit of Christianity is here at stake, I shall venture a few more extracts. I know well that according to one of the Evangelists, "God is love"; but I know also that all the great logicians in the Christian Church, who have ventured to express themselves clearly upon the means of salvation and the nature of future punishment, have adopted the Calvinistic doctrines, which represent Jehovah as hate incarnate,—a being more wicked and detestable than any other conception of character, which has ever been presented to the human mind. All the demons of romance, all the scoundrels of history are angels of light in comparison with him; and if I had to choose between worshipping a Nero, a Caligula, a Tiberius, a Borgia and a Mephistopheles on one side, and the Christian Jehovah on the other, I should not hesitate for a moment in preferring the former.

Digitized by Google

Protestant Christianity is generally understood to mean Calvinism, "which is the doctrine of the Established Churches of England and Scotland,"* and of about two-thirds of the Protestant Church-congregations in the United States. The doctrines of Calvinism are that men are so formed that they are by nature wholly inclined to all moral evil; that, in consequence of this nature, God inflicts on those, who remain as they were thus formed to be, the most terrible punishments; that he will be their eternal enemy and infinite tormentor; that having hated them from their birth, he will continue to exercise upon them forever his unrelenting and omnipotent hatred; and that, though he has chosen some to be saved out of the common ruin, their number is comparatively small.

"Grace," says Calvin, "snatches from the curse and wrath of God, and from eternal death a few, who would otherwise perish: but leaves the world in the ruin to which it has been ordained" (*Inst. L. III. C.* 22. § 7). And again he says "All things being at God's disposal, and the decision of salvation or death belonging to him, he orders all things by his counsel and decree in such manner that some men are born devoted from the womb to certain death: that his name may be glorified in their destruction" (*C.* 23. § 6). Elsewhere he says "The whole race of Adam is by nature under a *curse*, so that even infants, before being born to light, are liable to eternal death." Hell is paved with the skulls of infants not a span long: and the mothers lounge about on the benches in heaven, and, looking down, laugh as they see the little souls of their children broiling on the infernal coals. "You deny," says the Genevan reformer in reply to Castalio,—"You deny that it is lawful for God to damn any one unless for actual transgression. Innumerable infants are taken from life. Put forth now your virulence against God, who plunges into eternal death harmless infants, torn from their mother's breasts:" "their whole nature is, as it were, a seed of sin: so that it cannot be otherwise than odious and abominable to God." In his *Confession* Calvin says "We are every one of us born infected with original sin, and from our mother's womb are under the curse of God, and a sentence of damnation." The

* North British Review. Feb., 1851.

Digitized by Google

Westminster Assembly declared that "God by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time," "hath chosen some men to eternal life," and "hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise and glory of his justice." The synod of Dort, which defined the canons of Calvinism, declared that, "as all men have sinned in Adam, and become obnoxious to a curse and eternal death, God would have done injustice to no one, if he had willed to leave the whole human race in sin, and under a curse, and to damn them on account of sin." The same Synod agreed that "All men are conceived in sin, and born children of wrath, without ability for any good tending to salvation, inclined to evil, dead in sins, and slaves of sin: and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, have neither will, nor power to return to God, to correct their depraved nature, or to dispose themselves to its correction." According to the Church of England, "the condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith, and calling upon God."

Again Calvin says "Predestination by which God adopts some to the hope of life, and adjudges others to eternal death, no one desirous of the credit of piety, dare absolutely to deny. * * * Now with respect to the reprobate, as Jacob without any merit yet acquired by good works, is made an object of grace, so Esau, while yet unpolluted by any crime is accounted an object of hatred (*Rom. IX.* 13). If we turn our attention to works, we insult the apostle, as though he saw not that which is clear to us. Now that he saw none is evident because he expressly asserts the one to have been elected, and the other rejected, while they had not yet done any good or evil, to prove the foundation of divine predestination not to be in works. Secondly, when he raises the question whether God is unjust, he never urges what would have been the most absolute and obvious defence of his justice,—that God rewarded Esau according to his wickedness: but contents himself with a different solution,—that the reprobate are raised up for this purpose, that the glory of God may be displayed by their means.

Digitized by Google

Lastly he subjoins a concluding observation that 'God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth!' You see how he attributes both to the mere will of God. If therefore we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people, but because such is his pleasure, neither shall we find any other cause but his will for the reprobation of others: for when God is said to harden, or show mercy to whom he pleases, men are taught by this declaration to seek no cause beside his will."

Jonathan Edwards, as the greatest Calvinist after Calvin himself, adds the following commentary to these doctrines: "The view * of the misery of the damned will double the ardor of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven. The sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness: but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness: it will give them a more lively relish of it: it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, Oh! it will make them sensible how happy they are! A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy, or pleasure." And again he says * "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, such as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire: he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight: you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night: that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep; and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell, since you arose in the morning, but that God's

* Sermon on the Eternity of Hell-Torments.

† Sermon on Sinners in the hand of an angry God.

Digitized by Google

hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given, why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not, at this very moment, drop down into hell."

Among the great Calvinistic writers, Baxter has a high place, and he expresses himself as follows : †. "The torments of the damned must needs be extreme, because they are the effect of divine revenge. Wrath is terrible, but revenge is implacable. * * Consider also how this justice and revenge will be the delight of the Almighty. Though he would rather men would stoop to Christ, and accept of his mercy, yet, when they persist in rebellion, he will take pleasure in their execution. * * Wo to the soul which God rejoiceth to punish. Yea, he tells the simple ones that love simplicity, and the scorners that delight in scorning, and the fools that hate knowledge, 'that because he called and they refused, he stretched out his hand, and no man regarded, but set at nought all his counsel, and would none of his reproof : therefore he will also laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh' *(Prov. I. 22–25)*. * * Is it not a terrible thing to a wretched soul, when it shall lie roaring perpetually in the flames of hell, and the God of mercy himself shall laugh at them, when they shall cry out for mercy, yea for one drop of water, and God shall mock them instead of relieving them ; when none in heaven or earth can help them but God, and he shall rejoice over them in their calamity. Why, you see these are the very words of God himself in the Scripture."

Neither let any one tell me that I am guilty of any misrepresentation or unfairness here ; that Calvinism is not Christianity. I do assert that Calvinism is Christianity, and that it is recognized to be Christianity in its essential features by nine-tenths of the sincere Christians, who have made their faith a matter of study. Examine the language of the Scripture itself :—

"The carnal mind is enmity against God." *Rom. VIII.* 7.

* Saint's Rest. Part III. Ch. IV.

Digitized by Google

"Learn in us not to think above that which is written." 1 *Cor. IV.* 6.

"Many be called, but few chosen." *Mat. XX.* 16.

"Jews and Gentiles" "are all under sin." *Rom. III.* 9.

"There is none righteous; no, not one." *Rom. III.* 10.

"By the deeds of the law" "shall no flesh be justified." *Rom. III.* 20.

"I know that in me dwelleth no good thing." *Rom. VII.* 18.

"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth." *Rom. IX.* 18.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What, if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." *Rom. IX.* 21–23.

"When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Jacob (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;), it was said unto her, 'The elder shall serve the younger', as it is written, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid! For he saith to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.' So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." *Rom. IX.* 10–16.

"God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, 'Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.' But what saith the answer of God unto him? 'I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal'. Even so, at this present time

Digitized by Google

also, there is a *remnant*, according to the election of grace." *Rom. XI.* 2–5.

"By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." *Eph. II.* 8.

"We [Jews] were by nature the children of wrath even as others." *Eph. II.* 3

"All the world is become guilty before God." *Rom. III.* 19, 23.

"No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." *John VI.* 44.

"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." *Acts XIII.* 48.

"Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." *Eph. IV.* 7.

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do his good pleasure." *Philip. II.* 12, 13.

This is a fair representation of the spirit of all Paul's writing; and it is pure Calvinism. So it was understood by St. Augustine who wrote that "By an unconditional divine decree, we are all predestined either to eternal happiness or damnation. All heathens, whose apparent virtues are only splendid vices, and even all children, which die without baptism, are lost. Salvation can be attained only by grace; free will is powerless to save."

Persons who have never examined the doctrines of the Bible may imagine that it teaches the possibility of every man's attaining salvation by his own efforts. But the Christian commentators recognize no such doctrine; they teach that no one can believe without assistance from Jehovah. The Protestants are divided into two great classes —the Calvinists and the Arminians; both say that men are saved by grace, and by grace only; and the difference between them is, that the former say that if God sends his grace upon any man, he cannot help but believe and be saved; whereas, the Arminians declare that the man can resist and be damned if he insists upon it. I have made the following extracts from the Arminian Confession of Faith:—God "determined from all eternity to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere unto the end in their faith in Jesus Christ, and to inflict everlasting punishment on

Digitized by Google

those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist unto the end his divine succors;" "that none who do not believe in Christ can partake of the divine benefit" of his sacrifice; "that true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free will; since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable either of thinking or doing any good; and, therefore, that it is necessary to his conversion and salvation that he be regenerated and renewed by the operations of the Holy Ghost;" "that this divine grace or energy of the Holy Ghost, which heals the disorders of a *corrupt* nature, begins, advances, and brings to perfection everything that can be called good in man; and that consequently, all good works, without exception, are to be attributed to God and to the operation of his grace."[1]

The people who publish this are the anti-Calvinists, and between the two they occupy all the high places in the evangelical Christian churches. "If a man speak of human virtue as meritorious in the sight of God" it is generally concluded that he is not a Calvinist; if a man speak of divine grace as being powerless to save against the will of those to whom it is offered, it is generally concluded that he is an Arminian.

Such doctrines are a subject rather for satire than for logical argumentation, and I cannot attain my end in opposing them better than by making the following quotation from *The Widow Bedott Papers*, by Miss Miriam Berry:

"REV. MR. PRICE.—How does Mr. Shaw feel?

MRS. SHAW.—I regret to say that he does not feel his lost and ruined condition as sensibly as I could wish. Oh! Oh! If that man *only* had saving faith—and if Serapheen [her daughter] was *only* a Christian, my happiness would be complete.

MR. P.—Y-e-s. I trust that you wrestle for them without ceasing at the Throne of Grace;

MRS. S.—I do so, Mr. Price, I do so.

MR. P.—And do you feel that in case the Lord should see fit to disregard your petitions, and consign them to everlasting misery, you could acquiesce in his decrees, and rejoice in their destruction?

MRS. S.—I feel that I could, without a murmur.

Digitized by Google

Mr. P.—Y-e-s. I am very happy, sister Shaw, to find you in such a desirable state of mind."

"If true religion* be adapted to produce the most excellent virtues by holding forth the most powerful motives and sanctions, and requiring that these should be regarded in every moral action, we cannot therefore infer that the same effect is to be expected from a religion which traffics in pardons for sin ; or from a religion which teaches that the main thing is to perform certain rites and to regard certain observances ; or from a religion which insists on the reception of a system of doctrines as the sure and only passport to eternal happiness ; and still less from one which brings virtue into contrast with some other requisition or characteristic, and makes light of the former, and regards it even as a subject of contempt and jealousy in comparison with the latter,—denominating all human excellence by some such title as *the filthy rags of self-righteousness.* If it be the genuine operation of a true religion to produce a constant effort after moral perfection, because it teaches that good and evil are before us, and that it is for us to choose and attain which we will ; we cannot conclude that this will be the operation of a religion which inculcates as a fundamental truth, the doctrine that we have no moral power, that our condition will not at all depend on anything which we may do ; but that our eternal happiness or misery has been determined by the pleasure of another being, who has issued his irreversible decrees without reference to any qualities which he may see in us. * * * What shall we say of a religion which teaches that He has formed men so, that they are by nature inclined to all moral evil ; that he has determined in consequence to inflict upon the greater part of our race the most terrible punishments ; and that unless he has seen fit to place us among the small number of those whom he has chosen out of the common ruin, he will be our eternal enemy and infinite tormentor ; that having hated us from our birth, he will continue to exercise upon us forever his unrelenting and omnipotent hatred ! * * * Yet he must be a very ignorant or a very bold man who will affirm that the doctrines last stated have not been taught, and

* Norton. True and False Religion.

Digitized by Google

very extensively too, as fundamental doctrines of Christianity."

I know very well that there are many Christians who are not Calvinists—who believe that all good men will be saved—who imagine that God is really love, and suppose that he permits the existence of evil only because he cannot help himself: but these persons are not logicians: they do not make their religious dogmas a matter of study: they trust that the universe must be governed by such benevolent feelings as they perceive in their own minds. All these persons are more or less heretical: many of them go so far as to think that an honest and good man, who rejects the Bible after a fair examination of the evidence on both sides, will be just as likely to go to Heaven as if he received it. Such persons have no right to set up their heresies as Christianity and assert that Calvinism is a corruption.

Every Christian believer requires the most undoubting confidence in his own salvation, (a confidence which it is very difficult for the majority to obtain, while they consider their own imperfections and doubts) or the blindest carelessness as to his future fate, as a protection against the most overwhelming fear of condemnation to hell. And no matter how confident he may be of his own salvation, he must always, if he care much for others, be in terror for the fate of those who are dear to him, and of whose piety and compliance with the demands of the Scripture, he can never be entirely certain. Who has not observed the vain but sad terrors, the deep sufferings caused to Christian parents, filled with the deepest love for their children, to see them neglect or reject the special form of faith, in which alone they themselves trust for salvation. Imagine, reader, for a moment that you were a Christian believing with the fullest confidence in the orthodox doctrine of the damnation of the greater portion of the human race for unbelief, imagine, that you were in Heaven as Lazarus was, and could look down into the bottomless pit, and there see your wife, your brother, your sister, and your friends, broiling upon a slow fire, groaning and shrieking, quivering and writhing, with the blood and grease stewing out over the whole surface of the blackened, smoking and distorted flesh —imagine such a picture and try to be happy in the thought,

Digitized by Google

in the expectation that that picture in all its dread reality shall be present to you throughout eternity. "Thousands of deeply penitent and humble minded persons have lived many years, and perhaps died, in a state of deep depression, because they could not attain to that confident assurance that their sins would be pardoned, which they were told was essential to salvation: while murderers have gone to the gibbet, exulting in strains of rapture as though they were being carried to the stake, as faithful martyrs of Jesus Christ." *

§ 144. The Bible teaches intolerance. Under the Mosaic law, all heretics were to be destroyed. Moses commanded that the false prophet and idolaters should be stoned: Israel should wash its hands of the sin. Whenever it is mentioned in the sacred history that a monarch tolerated heathen worship, it is mentioned as a blot upon his piety—as a cause why Jehovoh could not look with full favor upon him: and those monarchs who destroyed the altars and slew the priests of Baal, are held out as models of godliness. Certainly, it would be a difficult matter to find any text favorable to toleration in the Old Testament; and it would be quite as difficult to deduce the doctrine from the teachings of the New. Paul cursed the man who should teach a doctrine different from his own. The belief that unbelievers will all go to hell, must make men uncharitable and intolerant. It is not possible that it should be otherwise. We are too much interested in the welfare of our fellows to look with friendliness or indifference on a man who is endeavoring, even with good intentions, to propagate such doctrines as must bring every one, who accepts them, into infinite and endless pain. The sincere Christian must hate all heretics and skeptics with a holy hatred, and he must resort to every means within his reach to prevent the spread of their doctrines. If he folds his hands, and looks listlessly on their labors, he becomes an accomplice in their rebellion against Jehovah; he will be partly to blame for the infinite suffering which they must cause. Zealous Christians must resort to all kinds of persecution—to every possible means which may serve to prevent the spread of an evil, in comparison with which all sufferings on earth are a trifle. If one soul can be saved from hell at the cost of the

* Christian Observer. January. 1844.

Digitized by Google

burning of a thousand infidels, its salvation will be obtained at a cheap rate. The fleeting pains of ten thousand men for a few hours in this life, are as nothing in comparison with the incomparably more agonizing suffering of one soul throughout all eternity. "What considerations of temporal happiness, or misery," asks Mrs. Stowe (*Dred. Ch. XV.*) "can shake the constancy of the theologian, who has accustomed himself to contemplate and discuss as a cool intellectual exercise the eternal misery of generations? who worships a God that creates myriads only to glorify himself in their eternal torments?"

The intolerant conduct of Christians and Christian churches causes a vast amount of cant and hypocrisy. At least, two thirds of the more intelligent men in the United States are "infidels;" but they dare not say so because it is not popular. At least four fifths of the American editors are "infidels," but they dare not say so, because it would be unpopular. "The English and the Americans," says Emerson, "cant beyond all other nations." The Church is the cause of this cant, and loves it. The Church demands it as "the tribute which vice pays to virtue," according to their phrase—"as the tribute which slaves and dastards pay to bigotry and superstition," according to my phrase. There is no slavery which degrades and debases a man so much as the slavery of the mind, one of the worst forms of which is hypocrisy. When the toppling edifice of Christianity at last tumbles, we shall see men who will dare to speak their sentiments on matters of religion.

Men cannot worship a God, and receive with reverence the writings of his supposed prophets, without imbibing, to some extent, their spirit as described in the Sacred Scriptures. If they have full faith that God's greatest favorites on earth held men in deep political and social slavery, had numerous wives, concubines, and eunuchs, and committed assassination, adultery, barbarous cruelty toward their enemies and unpalliated faithlessness toward their friends, having, at the same time, no redeeming features of high morality —if they can believe that, then their own virtue has reached a dangerous position. If such deeds can be right for others, why not for themselves? Does the nature of right change? Does God grant dispensations to his favorites? Besides, the

Digitized by Google

mere complication of duties, by the required observance of a multitude of ceremonies which are necessary to the maintenance of an outward church, is in itself a serious evil, and must prevent the mind from giving the proper attention to the dictates of mere human virtue. Hypocritical ceremony and earnest morality are natural enemies : they do not like to occupy the same house.

The tendency of the Bible is to dethrone conscience ; to encourage men to do good, not for the pleasure which it affords, by gratifying the noblest impulse of the mind, but for the sake of the reward, which is to be paid in another life. And, therefore, Christians generally declare that the hope of heaven, and the fear of hell are the only sanctions of morality ; and that if they did not exist, he would be a fool who would not be a rogue. St. Paul declares, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not : let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die" (1. *Cor. XV.* 32). That is to say, if he did not expect to be rewarded in heaven, he would live in an entirely different manner, spending his time in all kinds of licentious indulgence. And so, too, Robert Hall declared that without a hell, "a deviation from rectitude would become the part of wisdom, and should the path of virtue be obstructed by disgrace, torment, or death, to persevere would be madness and folly." Paley said that virtue consists in "doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, for the sake of eternal happiness." Watson warned Gibbon that if he should succeed in overthrowing Christianity, he would free the world from "every powerful incentive to virtue." And John Quincy Adams wrote that belief in "a future state of rewards and punishments" is absolutely essential as a foundation of morality. And although these expressions are disapproved of by many Christians, yet it appears to me that they are justified by the general spirit of the Bible itself. When that book, in its position as the master of the religious belief of nations, asserts that man's greatest merit and demerit are not matters of volition, but of belief, it corrupts and debases man, denies the authority of his conscience and reason, and subjects him to an arbitrary rule that can never harmonize with the natural faculties which should guide him.

Digitized by Google

The merit of faith cannot be exalted without depreciating the value of moral action. The Bible asserts that the highest merit lies in actions which have no moral quality; or which are decidedly immoral. It makes a virtue of belief—of blind belief. It declares that the highest moral actions are less meritorious than such credulity as may be expected from every fool. The Christian Deity burns with a bitter hate against Franklin, Jefferson, Hume, Fichte, and Spinoza, and condemns them to the hottest flames of hell, while his bosom glows with delight as he contemplates the frantic capers of every benighted Methodist.

The consequence of such a belief is that many of the Christians dislike the teacher or preacher who appeals chiefly to the conscience as a rule of moral conduct. The truth of this statement was discovered by that eminent and excellent clergyman, Sydney Smith, who complained that "It is impossible to describe the gloom and misery which fanaticism is everywhere producing, or the degradation of human reason and the destruction of comfort by which its course is marked. And the grievous misfortune is that there is no remedy. What answer can be made to a mistaken enthusiast who refers you to his impulses and feelings? In what way is it possible to illumine an understanding which supposes religion not to consist in what you do, but in what you believe; not in performing the divine commandment, but merely in admitting it to be divine, though you disobey it? One perceptible consequence of the mischievous doctrines is an increasing cry against morality and moral doctrines, so that it almost requires an apology from any teacher of religion, if he wishes to enforce anything useful and practical, from the pulpit." And how could it well be otherwise? The great object of Christianity is not to make men good and kindly toward their brethren in this world, but to save the greatest possible number of souls for the next one.

Connected with this false theory of duty, are the degrading tenets of future rewards and punishments—tenets which are not so debasing in themselves as in the manner in which they are taught, not inconsistently with some portions of the New Testament. Emerson in his Essay on *Compensation* gives the popular Christian dogma as he once heard it expounded in Church. "The preacher, a

Digitized by Google

man esteemed for his orthodoxy, unfolded in the ordinary manner the doctrine of the last judgment. He assumed that judgment is not executed in this world: that the wicked are successful: that the good are miserable: and then urged from reason, and from Scripture, a compensation to be made to both parties in the next life. No offence appeared to be taken by the congregation at this doctrine. As far as I could observe, when the meeting broke up, they separated without remark on the sermon.

"Yet what was the import of this teaching? What did the preacher mean by saying, that the good are miserable in the present life? Was it that houses and lands, offices, wine, horses, dress, luxury, are had by unprincipled men, whilst the saints are poor and despised: and that a compensation is to be made to these hereafter, by giving them the like gratification another day,—bank-stock and doubloons, venison and champagne? This must be the compensation intended: for, what else? Is it that they are to have leave to pray and to praise? to love and serve men? Why, they can do that now. The legitimate inference the disciple would draw, was: 'We are to have such a good time as the sinners have now:' or to push it to its extreme import,—'You sin now; we shall sin by-and-by: we would sin now, if we could: not being successful, we expect our revenge to-morrow.'"

When a man becomes enslaved to such dogmas, when he looks to any external source for the guide of his action, when he dethrones his own conscience, when he imagines that virtue is anything but obedience to the high impulses of his own soul, then he is far down, and may need a superstitious creed to protect him from the terrors of his own imagination: and is thus doubly debased.

§ 145. The Bible is the chief stronghold of conservatism, the great armory whence she draws her weapons to be used in the warfare against Progress. Wherever in Christendom the friends of human rights are working to free humanity from the shackles of enslaving prejudice, custom, law and class, there the Bible-worshippers are in the way: there they appeal to their superannuated Gospel to show that resistance to tyrants is rebellion against God. Submission to the king and the aristocracy, is preached

Digitized by Google

every Sunday to the English poor: submission to the master is preached every Sunday to the American slave. When demands are made for a repeal of the laws of primogeniture, of the laws subjecting women to great disabilities and serious wrongs, of the commerce-shackling usury-laws—these demands are met with an appeal to the Bible. Whichever way the stream of progress seeks to flow, there the Bible rises as a dam. That dam must be torn away. Conservatism may be good, but it should be compelled to use none save fair means: the friends of progress may sometimes be too hasty, but let them have fair play. Let them not be defeated with the mere weapons of superstition.

§ 146. The Bible forbids the free use of reason. It claims to be of divine authority, of authority superior to human reason; and it threatens all unbelievers with the pains of hell. In no place does it enjoin devotion to truth, for its own sake; it never teaches that truth should be sought by impartial, open, and bold investigation. The threatened penalty for unbelief is a denunciation of investigation into the truth of the Bible, and of the doubt which must always precede a beneficial examination. Few men will desire to investigate a question, the examination of which would, according to their belief, lead to their condemnation to suffer infinite torments in eternal hell. By denouncing doubt, and discouraging investigation, it discredits reason, and thus would deprive us of our only natural guide in the search of religious truth: it would cut off the resource in which we should confidently rely, and a proud reliance on which is productive of the most ennobling and beneficial influences; as distrust of it, and preference for the guidance of tradition and hereditary dogmas, has in all ages degraded man, and led to the basest superstition, the most horrid bigotry, and the most abominable crimes.

"A good man," says Jeremy Taylor, "that believes what, according to his light, and the use of his moral industry, he thinks true, whether he hits upon the right, or not, because he hath a mind desirous of truth, and prepared to believe every truth, is therefore acceptable to God." "This" says Norton, "is admirable. But it is melancholy to think that we have so long been accustomed to nothing but what

Digitized by Google

is bigoted, and narrow, and irrational on the subject of religion, that we feel delight in the expression of any generous or manly sentiment, though it be nothing but the most obvious truth. We are like those who have been so long confined within the walls of a prison, that they are filled with emotion at being restored to the common light and air."

The appeal to miracles and prophecies as proof of the truth of doctrines, is an insult to reason, and if it be recognized as proper, it degrades humanity. An absurd dogma, which is, and cannot be made reasonable to my understanding, is held out to me with an order to believe,—not a request to examine. At the same time I am told belief will be rewarded with a sugar plum, and disbelief with a whipping; and, as the only proof for the truth of his doctrine, the retailer of salvation tells me that two thousand years ago Jesus turned water into wine. Jesus never asks men to believe except on the evidence of prophecies and miracles; he never endeavors to open the reason, so that his doctrine shall make its home there, and hold its place in defiance of all adverse teaching, supported only by juggling evidence; and when the cities refuse to believe his doctrines on the faith of his tricks, he damns them to a worse fate than that of Sodom or Gomorrah. The worship of such a God degrades and debases man.

"You have all heard," says Channing, "of the outward evils, which religion, when turned into tyranny, has inflicted; how it has dug dreary dungeons, kindled fires for the martyr, and invented instruments of exquisite torture. But to me all this is less fearful than its influence over the mind. When I see the superstitions which it has fastened on the conscience, the spiritual terrors with which it has haunted and subdued the ignorant and susceptible, the dark, appalling views of God which it has spread far and wide, the dread of inquiry which it has struck into superior understandings, and the servility of spirit which it has made to pass for piety,—when I see all this, the fire, the scaffold, and the outward inquisition, terrible as they are, seem to me inferior evils. I look with solemn joy on the heroic spirits, who have met freely and fearlessly pain and death in the cause of truth and human rights. But there are other victims of intolerance, on whom I look with unmixed sorrow. They are

Digitized by Google

those who, spell-bound by early prejudice, or by intimidations from the pulpit and the press, dare not think ; who anxiously stifle every doubt or misgiving in regard to their opinions, as if to doubt were a crime ; who shrink from the seekers after truth as from infection ; who deny all virtue, which does not wear the livery of their own sect ; who, surrendering to others their best powers, receive unresistingly a teaching which wars against reason and conscience ; and who think it a merit to impose upon such as live within their influence, the grievous bondage which they bear themselves. How much to be deplored is it, that religion, the very principle which is designed to raise men above the judgment and power of man, should become the chief instrument of usurpation over the soul."

That subjection to superstition is injurious to the morality and happiness of any people scarcely needs to be asserted here. It is of the very essence of superstition to be a curse. The evils of the belief in demoniac possession, in witches, in the divine authority of those bodies of priests, who have riveted the bonds of social and political tyranny in a hundred states, are undeniable. The belief in an immediate divine government of the universe is not less productive of evil. It "refers * all merit and demerit to bad and good fortune, and causes the successful man to be always considered as a good man, and the unhappy man as an object of divine vengeance. It furnishes ignorant and designing men with a power which is sure to be abused,—the cry of a *judgment*, a *judgment*, is always easy to make, but not easy to resist. It encourages the grossest superstitions ; for if the Deity rewards and punishes on every slight occasion, it is quite impossible but that such a helpless being as man will set himself at work to discover the will of heaven in the appearances of outward nature, to apply all the phenomena of thunder, lightning, wind, and every striking appearance, to the regulation of his conduct ; as the poor Methodist, when he rode into Piccadilly in a thunder storm, imagined that all the uproar of the elements was a mere hint to him not to preach at Mr. Romaine's chapel. Hence a great deal of error and a great deal of secret misery. This doctrine of a theocracy, must necessa-

REV. SYDNEY SMITH Article on Methodism.

Digitized by Google

rily place an excessive power in the hands of the clergy; it applies so instantaneously and so tremendously to men's hopes and fears, that it must make the priest omnipotent over his people, as it always has done where it has been established." It has a great tendency to check human exertions, and to prevent the employment of those secondary means of effecting an object which nature has placed in our power.

The main object of Jesus is not to teach men how to live at all, but how to die. The life beyond the grave ought to be, the only subject of a Christian's contemplation. To secure an entrance to the gates of heaven, he should hesitate at no sacrifice. Poverty, fasting, humility, passive submission to all forms of oppression, blind faith in the traditions of his grandmother, careful avoidance of every one suspected of thinking for himself, self-denial, self-castration, and monkery—these are the glorious virtues which shall serve as keys to unlock the celestial gates. The Christian's surest hope for heaven is in making earth a hell. He must serve God by mortifying the appetites which God gave.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXV.

PHYSIOLOGY VS. A FUTURE STATE.

> "Frown not upon me, churlish priest! that I
> Look not for life, where never life may be:
> I am no sneerer at thy phantasy;
> Thou pitiest me,—alas! I envy thee,
> Thou bold discoverer in an unknown sea,
> Of happy isles, and happier tenants there:
> I ask thee not to prove a Sadducee.*
> Still dream of Paradise, thou knowst not where,
> But lov'st too well to bid thine erring brother share."
>
> BYRON.

§ 147. The New Testament asserts that the human mind or soul, will live forever after the death of the body, in the possession of consciousness and sensation, with the personality and individuality which characterize the man on earth, with thought and memory, and with capabilities of feeling pleasure and pain. That is to say after dying upon earth, every man will awaken to a new life, in which he will continue to be the same man as before, so far as his mind and thoughts are concerned. Jesus "came," as his followers say, "to bring life and immortality to light," to save men from infinite pain, and to secure to them infinite pleasure, in the future state of existence: and thus, the dogma becomes one of the most important of the Christian creed. When it falls, Christianity must fall with it. I shall endeavor to prove it to be false, and I shall base my arguments against it, principally on the facts of physiology.

* I place the words of the great poet at the head of this chapter, without adopting all his sentiments. Although he was a decided and active enemy of Christianity, he did not see fit to carry his hostility very far. I should be sorry, to deprive any one of the pleasures they may find in the hope of a future life, but the fear of any such result shall not prevent me from endeavoring to do justice to the cause of science, and intellectual freedom. The poet does not ask the priest "to prove a Sadducee," neither do I; but I ask that men shall make themselves familiar with all important truths of Physiology, and if they become "Sadducees" thereafter, they may thank natural philosophy—not me.

Digitized by Google

All known natural objects are divided into three kingdoms: the mineral, vegetable, and animal. These three kingdoms are intimately related to each other in many respects,—so intimately that the most learned scientific observers have been unable to discover the lines which separate them. Each class is composed of innumerable millions of individuals, different in rank and character from each other, and yet so marked that they can be arranged in groups gradually increasing in complexity and beauty of structure from the coarse, shapeless, primitive rock, up to crystal, more elegant and regular in form than some low vegetables which are connected in the same kingdom by numerous and evident bonds of relationship with the mighty monarchs of the forest, with the sensitive plant and the fly-catcher; and these latter are apparently superior in every thing, except the peculiar faculty called animal life, to some individuals of the worm and reptile classes, which again have their undisputed place in the same kingdom with the highest orders of the brute creation, and with man himself. Beginning at the rock, and ascending to the man, there is a chain of many links, and not one link wanting. Linneus remarks truly that nature makes no leaps. She has gone forward step by step; the successive footprints are recorded in indelible characters on the face of the universe. None of her productions are kinless; all are as though they had grown from one seed, which bore in its own bosom the faculty of developing itself into higher, more numerous, and more complex forms every year.

The vegetables and animals are composed of elements which are to be found in the older kingdom. As its children, they have taken its substance. The carbon, the oxygen, the hydrogen, the nitrogen, which exist in mineral form, are also found in the plants, which dig into the earth for their support. The same materials compose the greater portion of the frames of the animals, which devour the plants or their plant-eating brothers, and both plants and animals, as a general rule, must every day have new support from air or water, or they die. The same general qualities mark the objects of the three kingdoms; all have weight, extension, and inertia. The same natural forces appear to prevail through, and to support, as they are, the

Digitized by Google

three kingdoms. All are subject to similar mechanical and chemical influences; all are influenced by heat, electricity, and concussion. It was supposed, for many ages, that animal life was owing to a peculiar power, or vital force, unknown in the other kingdoms, and radically different from all the forces which exercise an influence therein. But this theory is now rejected by all the ablest physiologists. They can find nothing to support it; they find much to contradict it. Every process, every force discoverable in the animal frame has its kindred process or force, in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, in the chemist's laboratory, or the mechanic's workshop. The eye is a daguerreotyping establishment; the heart is a pump which forces arterial blood to the extremities, and sucks back the venous blood; the liver is an acid factory; the stomach takes the liver acid to dissolve the food; the brain is a galvanic battery which telegraphs thought and sensation along the wires of nervous fibre with a kind of electricity similar to that which New York uses in speaking to New Orleans; and the muscles, when required to act, are filled with electro-magnetism, so that the ends may be drawn together, just as the opposite poles of a steel magnet would approach each other, if its material were not stubbornly inflexible.

§ 148. Among the various kinds of animals, man is one. His body is material, and it possesses the distinguishing feature of the animal kingdom—a nervous system. His frame bears a close resemblance to that of other animals. It is composed of the same elements, and is divided into the same organs with the same functions. Man has muscle and bone, skin and hair, feet and mouth, stomach and heart, senses, and blood, and brain; and a dog has the same. And he is a pretty good chemist who will distinguish a slice of human muscle, or brain, or a drop of human blood from similar portions of the canine system. Men and brutes are alike produced by generation, supported by nourishing food placed in the stomach and by a constant supply of air; and they die from similar causes, either mechanical or chemical violence, or the exhaustion by age of the life-sustaining power of their organs. The quadruped and the man have minds differing in power, but not differing substantially in kind. The brutes have reason, memory, and passion; they ar-

Digitized by Google

evidently actuated in many of their movements by motives similar to those which govern men. When young, they are playful, and grave when old. Their countenances and actions at different times show plainly that the mind is filled with doubt, anger, revenge, fear, content, exultation, shame, joy, pride, love of frolic, and maternal love. They not only show these sentiments, but their characters are marked by the general predominance of certain mental impulses. They are "envious,* irascible, placable, [faithful, affectionate,] courageous, cowardly, vain, sober, haughty, humble, vindictive, generous, cunning, candid, [clever,] or stupid, just like human beings. According to the divisions laid down by phrenologists, they possess benevolence, self-esteem, cautiousness, love of approbation, hope, wonder, comparison, and many other of the faculties possessed by man. There is scarcely one of the ingredients of mind which is not bestowed upon them, and they have perversions of the faculties from disease like man. They [more particularly dogs, horses, swine, and kine] *go mad*, and the mother destroys her offspring† under the influence of puerperal insanity, as women do."

Brutes learn by experience, and that learning implies not only memory, but the faculty of reasoning by analogy. It is said that brutes and men are distinguished from each other in the possession of reason by the latter, and "instinct" by the former; but the probability is that both possess instinct and reason, differing only in the different degrees of development. That brutes reason is shown by multitude of facts recorded in every work on zoology: and that men have instinct is also a fact scarcely to be denied by those who will look at the evidence. A singular case is related by Carpenter in his work on *Human Physiology*, of an idiotic girl in Paris, who, having been delivered in solitude of a child, when found, actuated doubtless by the same instinctive impulse which guides the brute-mother, had gnawn off the umbilical cord of her offspring. Man's very

*WIGAN.—On the duality of the mind. Ch. XXVI.

† This offspring-murder is a frequent occurrence in the swine-raising counties of Ohio and Indiana. Sows which ordinarily show great affection for their young, when provided with an abundance of food of every kind, set upon their offspring and devour them.

Digitized by Google

great mental superiority in a state of civilization, and his evident superiority, even in the lowest state of barbarism, to the brute, is owing to a great extent to faculties which do not belong to the mind—to the hand capable of grasping, to the erect form which leaves the grasping hand at liberty, and to the tongue, throat-muscles, and ear which give him the faculty of communicating his thoughts. By the aid of these faculties he is capable of educating himself, and of rising to a greatness far beyond the condition in which he now is. Without these he would be as near to the chimpansee as the latter is to some of the lower orders of monkeys.

Man belongs to a certain class of animals: he is placed by naturalists among the "mammalia"—that class which give birth to their young alive, and suckle them at the teat—that class which includes the ape, the elephant, the lion, the wolf, the mouse, the opossum, and the whale. The unscientific observer might say that nature had made a great leap from the disgusting brutishness and vile form of the ape to the beautiful and majestic body, and all-comprehending mind of a Gœthe. But that vast distance was not made at one leap; there are many steps between the two points. The infant and the idiot, connected by steps, infinitely small with the greatest philosopher, are inferior in intelligence to the ape: and Solly, a physiologist and author of high and undisputed merit, declared that there was a greater distance between the minds of a Newton and a common hewer of wood and drawer of water, than between the mind of the latter and that of a dog. But the idiots, children, and uneducated persons of the Caucasian family are not the only humans, nearly related to the brutes. The lowest tribes of savages connect* "with the beasts in the most unmistakeable manner by a multitude of the most striking resemblances. The long arms, the form of the foot, the thin calf, the long narrow hands, the general leanness, the projecting lower jaw, the low sloping forehead, the small head running far back, the short neck, the narrow pelvis, the prominent belly, the beardless chin, the dark skin, the abominable smell, the filthiness, the grimaces in speaking, and the sharp shrieking tones of the voice are

* BUECHNER, Kraft und Stoff.

Digitized by Google

so many marks of his near relationship to the ape." And through his kinship to the ape and the other mammalia, he is akin to the bird, and the fish, the snake, the shellfish, the bug, the worm, and the polypus. Indeed, physiologists say, that man is a member of different lower orders at different times—so far as can be distinguished by external signs. While in the progress of formation, previous to birth, the human brain takes first the form of the brain of a fish; then that of a reptile; next that of a bird, then that of a low-class mammal, and finally, after having gone through all those stages, after having, as it were, belonged to four inferior orders, it is developed one step farther, to humanity.

There is one more point in which the near relationship of man to the lower animals is clearly observable, and although the consideration of it is necessarily in itself disagreeable, yet it should be looked at, since this professes to be a treatise on a matter of science, and science knows no feelings of bashfulness or delicacy—much less of prudery and false modesty. There are many records in history of hybrids—half man, half brute. The human had crossed breed with the beast mammal; and the offspring bore witness that the parents were made of live flesh and blood. But mammal and bird cannot produce a hybrid, neither can bird and fish: there is not enough relationship between them. Man is nearer to the dog than the dog is to the bird—nearer than the bird is to the fish—nearer than the fish is to the mollusca.

§149. The animal frame, in all its parts, appears to us to be made with an evident adaptation to certain ends, so far as we know, and much study has been devoted to the subject, and progress made in accumulating and comparing facts; every particle of the human system has its use—its purpose. The frame is divided into parts which differ from each other in form and material, and each of these parts or organs has a different function. The bones serve to stiffen the frame and shield the most delicate and important of the vital organs; the muscles give mechanical force and the power of locomotion; the stomach manufactures from the food new material to mend the constant wear and tear of every part of the system: and the nerves of sense enable the body to perceive its relations to other bodies beyond itself. No

Digitized by Google

two organs have the same function: the heart cannot secrete bile; the liver cannot pump blood through the arteries and veins; the stomach cannot do the work of the kidneys. This division of the animal frame into various organs with different functions is almost infinite in many portions of the body, minute particles of flesh, invisible to the naked eye, have tasks to perform, different from those of other, equally minute particles at their side.

The most noteworthy of the larger divisions of the animal frame is the head. It is the exclusive seat of the majority of the senses—sight, hearing, taste, and smell—the special organs of which are among the most delicately organized parts of the body. The head is also a vital organ; there is no method of taking life quicker than by wounding it. The largest portion of the head is the brain, a mass of matter with an exceedingly fine organization, surrounded and protected by a strong case of bone. The delicate material and guarded position of the encephalon and its vicinity, to the most sensible parts of the frame, would lead us, without knowing anything of its functions, but reasoning, according to the general analogies of nature, to believe that it is one of the most important organs—that it exercises some of the most important functions of the system: and physiologists assert that it is the organ of the mind, and as a necessary corollary in physiology that the mind is the function of the brain. We shall look at some of the evidence, on which they found their belief.

§ 150. The most important of all the animal faculties is the mind. By its means the animal is conscious and sensible, capable of feeling and thinking, capable of knowing the present, remembering the past and anticipating the future. Rank among brutes as among men, depends to a great extent upon it; and it is justly entitled to the elevated position in the brain and the strong protection of the skull. That faculty—mind—is the function of an organ, as all the other animal faculties are; and although it differs in its nature from all the other animal functions, yet these again differ from each other: digestion, muscular power, sight, smell, feeling, and blood-pumping have as little resemblance to each other as they have to the mind, yet they are all animal faculties.

Digitized by Google

151. Observation has established the fact that certain relations exist in all cases between the organs and their respective functions: and where those relations are found to exist between a faculty and a part of the frame, it is presumed, unless there be evidence to the contrary that the former is the function of the latter. Thus it is a general rule of physiology that the function is dependent for its normal action on the healthy condition of its organs. If the stomach be disordered, it will not digest well. If the heart be pierced by a sword through the centre, it will be unable to send the blood through the system. If the muscles of the thigh be divided transversely, they cannot sustain the body. To injure the nerves of sight, smell, and hearing, is to injure those functions, themselves. And a similar relationship exists between the brain and the mind. When the former is diseased, the latter is disordered. The blow which wounds the brain, wounds the mind. Perhaps the injury to the function is imperceptible in some cases, but it is, in all probability, none the less real. When the brain is irritated by the presence of intoxicating liquor, the mind becomes drunk, loses the clearness of its perceptions and does things which it would never do, which it would shrink from with horror, while sober. If the skull be broken so that the finger can be pressed in upon the brain, the pressure will render the man unconscious and insensible, and while the pressure continues he has no more mind than a chicken with its head cut off. The experiment has been tried frequently and the same result was always found to follow. So too a pressure on the brain produced by other causes may produce unconsciousness. The bursting of a blood vessel in the brain causes apoplexy and sometimes death, by the pressure of the blood on the organ which is the true seat of life.

"We know* the simple fact that all the manifestations of mind depend on physical structure — that every change therein is accompanied by a greater or less change in the mind—that its qualities, its sentiments, its opinions, its affections, its belief, its propensities and its passions are permitted to be influenced, strengthened, weakened or perverted by disease in the physical structure of the system—that

* WIGAN.

Digitized by Google

a blow on the head shall entirely alter the moral character of the individual—that slight inflammations of its structure shall change modesty, reserve and devotion into blasphemy and obscenity—that a small spicula of bone from the internal surface of the skull, shall transform love into hatred—that other diseases shall make the sober-minded man vain and silly, turn the hero into the coward or the coward into the ferocious bully—shall make the tender mother destroy her own offspring, and the loving husband put to death the object of his long-tried affection."

The mind is affected directly by the condition of the brain and not by that of any other organ. The loss of an arm or a leg, or of both arms and both legs, does not perceptibly injure the thinking faculty. Any part of the body below the chin may be seriously injured, without immediately affecting the mind. It is true that any obstruction in the flow of blood to the brain affects the mind, and a total stoppage causes a loss of consciousness, and death: but this fact affords no evidence against the theory that the brain is the organ of the mind. All the fleshy fibres of the animal's frame must have an uninterrupted and sufficient supply of good blood to enable them to act in a healthy manner: and if that supply be not furnished, the muscles, the stomach, the liver, and the kidneys will "strike" work as quickly as the brain.

§ 152. Another general rule, prevailing in the relations between organs and functions, is that the latter are strong in proportion to the size of the former. A large muscle is stronger than a small one: a large liver secretes more bile than a small one: a large stomach digests more food than a small one: and a very large olfactory nerve is usually considered indicative of a very acute sense of smell. The same rule prevails in the relationship between brain and mind. The fact may be perceived most readily by comparing different classes of animals. The long ladder of animal life, reaching, as it were, from heaven to earth, with thousands of rounds, beginning at man and running down step by step in the scale of physical development, gradually decreasing in beauty, strength and complexity of frame, and variety, vigor and grace of motion, is marked by an equal decrease in intellectual power and the amount of brain. Man is far

Digitized by Google

superior in intelligence to all the other animals, and his brain is absolute larger than that of any other except the elephant and whale: and it is also larger in proportion to the size of his frame than that of any other animal, with a few exceptions of the sparrow species; and these exceptions are more apparent than real. The sparrow owes much of his relatively large brain to the full development of the sensory ganglia, that part of the brain which is the seat of sensation and consciousness, while the thinking part—the Cerebrum—is proportionately smaller than in man. The difference between the brain of the man and that of the dog, between the brain of the dog and that of the sheep, and between the sheep's brain and the tortoise's brain is as good a measure as we have of the respective difference between their mental capacities. The same rule may be observed among men. The brain of women is usually one tenth less than that of men, and their mental faculties may be that much weaker. Infants have small, soft brains, and very weak minds—at first scarcely minds at all—and as the brain grows large and solid, the mind grows in activity and strength. A very small brain is a certain sign of idiocy, and very great talent is always accompanied by a very large brain.

§ 153. A third general rule of the relationship between the functions and the organs is that those organs, whose functions are under the control of the will, must rest about one third or fourth of the time. The heart, the lungs, the liver, and some other organs not under the control of the will, can not be driven by the will to go faster, nor compelled to stop; and they work, or can work, always without rest. But the muscles are under the control of the will, to a considerable extent at least; and they must have rest six or eight hours out of the twenty-four. So the mind is under the control of the will liable to be driven to great exertion or over-exertion, and requiring also for the brains its share of rest every day.

§ 154. A fourth general rule is that in old age the organs lose their vigor and strength, and the functions suffer a similar decay. The general loss of physical power, the *decline* of live in men after the age of forty or forty-five, is a matter of universal observation. All the organs appear

Digitized by Google

to lose; bones, muscles, stomach, liver, and the organs of secretion generally. The brain decreases in weight also, but not so much as the muscles; and therefore the brain, according to the experiments of Solly, is, on an average, heavier in proportion to the body at sixty years of age than at forty-five. And as the brain decreases in solidity, so does it lose force. Notwithstanding the constant and valuable accumulation of knowledge and experience, there is probably no human mind so strong at sixty as it was at forty. The majority of great intellectual works have been planned and executed by men in the blossom or bloom of manhood. The memory of events begins to fail before forty, and continues to fail rapidly after that age. At sixty the mind ordinarily becomes perceptibly weak, and if a man lives to eighty without falling into decided dotage, he is considered fortunate. Shakspeare, in his Seven Ages of Man, makes second childhood the natural termination of human life, and the truthfulness of his picture has been admired throughout the civilized world.

§ 155 A fifth general rule is that the exercise of the function wears away the organ, and that the wear and tear is proportioned to the amount of the exercise. The muscles are worn out by physical labor; the worn-out material is carried off through the pores of the skin and the kidneys. The chemist knowing the material of which the muscles are composed, and knowing approximately the amount of waste caused by great or little exertion, can, by examining the secretion of a man's kidney, and knowing the amount of time in which it was collected, may guess pretty near the truth at the amount of work done by him in that time. So, also, the exercise of the mind is always accompanied by a proportionate wear of the brain; and the worn-out matter is carried off through the urine, where it may be distinguished and its amount discovered.

§ 156. The sixth relation to which I shall here call attention, prevailing between mind and brain, as well as between animal organs and their functions generally is, that over-exertion of the latter causes pain and disorder in the former. Pain in the muscles is the consequence of extreme trials of the physical strength; pain in the eye follows undue exertion in the visual faculty; pain in the stomach is

the result of overloading the digestion; and in a similar manner severe application of the mind causes pain in the head.

§ 157. A seventh general rule is, that, when a function is in active exercise, the organ demands a larger supply of blood than when at rest. This is true of the stomach, the liver, the kidneys, and the sexual organs. Its truth is confirmed by many facts within the knowledge of every observant man, and is recognised in all the works on physiology. The large supply of blood is necessary to carry off the greater-than-usual waste, and to meet the increased demand for new material. The rule extends also to the brain and the mind. When the latter is active, or excited, the blood flows through the encephalon with greater rapidity and force than when the mental faculties are at rest. Sir Astley Cooper observed and recorded a case of this kind in a youth, whose brain was laid bare; and the learned surgeon gave his students the sensible advice, that, in treating wounds of the brain, they should be careful to keep the mind quiet.

§ 158. Another general rule is that organs and functions are different in nature, the former being material, and the latter immaterial. The optic, the auditory, and the olfactory nerves, the stomach, the muscles, and the kidneys are material, and have qualities belonging only to matter, such as extension, weight, and color; and they are divisible into certain elementary substances, such as phosphorus, carbon, and so on; but their respective faculties,—sight, hearing, smell, digestion, physical strength, and secretion, —are immaterial, cannot be weighed, measured, or felt, nor be separated into substantial elements. Qualities of matter are in their nature immaterial; if they could cease to be immaterial, they would cease to be qualities. The strength of a stick, the length of a block, the weight of a stone are things immaterial in themselves, and they cease to exist when the matter on which they were dependent, takes a new form. A function in its very nature is a mere quality of matter,—the office, employment, or faculty of a material organ. Such is the definition of the word "function," as given in our dictionaries, and we have no reason to deny its correctness. Like other organs and functions, the brain is material, and the mind is immaterial. The thinking faculty

Digitized by Google

has never been discovered by the knife, the scales, or the microscope, and like all other faculties, it will forever remain undiscoverable, except through its actions. Great importance is often attached by theologians to the *immateriality* of the mind, as though that were the only immaterial power which man possesses, whereas, on the contrary, there can be power which is not immaterial. Mind has no peculiar superiority in this respect over a thousand other functions of the animal frame.

§ 159. The *immateriality* of thought is often spoken of as something without analogy in the animal economy; but every act of an organ, or exercise of a function, is immaterial in the same manner. Thus, a movement of the arm, which is an exercise of the physical strength, as the function of that portion of the body, is immaterial, and, indeed, every motion, or action, from its very nature, must be so. Thought is an act of the mind, and like all other acts, can not exist as a substance, in and for itself.

§ 160 Physiology informs us not only that the mind is the function of the brain, but that different parts of the mind are the functions of different portions of the brain. The encephalon is composed chiefly of two divisions: the *Cerebrum* or upper part of the brain, and *Cerebellum* or lower and back part. Each of these parts has its peculiar mental function.

The Cerebellum is the seat of the power of governing the muscles in harmonious action. "We* find its degree of development corresponding pretty closely with the variety and energy of the muscular movements which are habitually executed by the species; the organ being the largest in those animals which require the *combined* effort of a great variety of muscles to maintain their usual position, or to execute their ordinary movements; whilst it is the smallest in those which require no muscular exertion for the one purpose, and little combination of different actions for the other. Thus in animals that habitually rest and move upon four legs, there is comparatively little occasion for any organ to combine and organize the actions of their several muscles; and in these the Cerebellum is usually small. But among the more active of the predaceous fishes, (as the

* CARPENTER --Elements of Physiology.

Digitized by Google

shark,)—birds of the most powerful and varied flight, (as the swallow,)—and such mammals as can maintain the erect position, and can use their extremities for other purposes than support and motion—we find the Cerebellum of much greater size, relatively to the remainder of the encephalon. There is a marked advance in this respect, as we ascend through the series of quadrumanous animals; from the baboons, which usually walk on all-fours, to the semi-erect apes, which often stand and move on their hind-legs only. The greatest development of the Cerebellum is found in man, who surpasses all other animals in the number and variety of the combinations of muscular movement, which his ordinary actions involve, as well as of those which he is capable, by practice, of learning to execute.

"From experiments upon all classes of vertebrated animals, it has been found that, when the Cerebellum is removed, the power of walking, springing, flying, standing, or maintaining the equilibrium of the body, is destroyed. It does not seem that the animal has in any degree lost the *voluntary* power over its individual muscles; but it can not *combine* their actions for any general movement of the body. The *reflex* movements, such as those of respiration, remain unimpaired. When an animal thus mutilated, is laid on its back, it can not recover its former posture; but it moves its limbs, or flutters its wings, and evidently not in a state of stupor. When placed in the erect position, it staggers and falls like a drunken man—not, however, without making efforts to maintain its balance.

"When the Cerebellum is affected with chronic disease, the motor function is seldom destroyed; but the same kind of want of combining power shows itself, as when the organ has been purposely mutilated. Some kind of lesion of the motor function is invariably to be observed; whilst the mental powers may or may not be affected—probably according to the influence of the disease in the Cerebellum upon other parts. The same absence of any direct connec tion with the psychical powers, is shown in the fact, that inflammation of the membranes covering it, if confined to the Cerebellum, does not produce delirium. Sudden effusions of blood into its substance may produce apoplexy or paralysis; but this may occur as a consequence of effusions into

Digitized by Google

any part of the encephalon, and does not indicate, that the Cerebellum has any thing to do with the mental functions, or with the power of the will over the muscles."

§ 161. The Cerebrum is the seat of intelligence and memory. "The results † of the removal of the Cerebral Hemispheres, in animals to which the shock of the operation does not prove immediately fatal, must appear extraordinary to those who have been accustomed to regard these organs as the centre of all energy. Not only Reptiles, but Birds and Mammalia, if their physical wants be supplied, may survive the removal of the whole Cerebrum for weeks, or even months. If the entire mass be taken away at once, the operation is usually fatal; but if it be removed by successive slices, the shock is less severe, and the depression it produces in the organic functions is soon recovered from. It is difficult to substantiate the existence of actual sensation, in animals thus circumstanced; but their movements appear to be of a higher kind than those resulting from mere reflex action. Thus they will eat fruit when it is put into their mouths: although they do not go to seek it. One of the most remarkable phenomena of such beings, is their power of maintaining their equilibrium; which could scarcely exist without consciousness. If a rabbit, thus mutilated, be laid upon its back, it rises again; if pushed, it walks; if a bird be thrown into the air, it flies; if a frog be touched, it leaps. If violently aroused, the animal has all the manner of one waking from sleep; and it manifests about the same degree of consciousness as a sleeping man, whose torpor is not too profound to prevent his suffering from an uneasy position, and who moves himself to amend it. In both cases, the movements are *consensual* only, and do not indicate any voluntary power; and we may well believe that, in the former case as in the latter, though *felt*, they are not *remembered*; an active state of the Cerebrum being essential to *memory*, though not to sensations, which simply excite certain actions."

It is supposed that consciousness, which is not destroyed by the removal of either the *Cerebrum*, or the *Cerebellum*, must reside in the *Sensory Ganglia*, which are masses of nervous matter at the base of the brain, in front of the *Me*

† CARPENTER.

Digitized by Google

dulla Oblongata; but physiologists have not yet been able to obtain so much evidence to prove its connection with any special portion of the brain, as they have found in regard to intelligence and the power of movement. That consciousness has its seat in some part of the brain, is considered as conclusively established by the fact that pressure on the brain deprives the animal of that faculty.

§ 162. We have thus traced all the more important, general bonds of union between the animal organs and functions from the consideration of which we could hope for any light upon the relation between the brain and the mind; and we have found that every analogy leads to the belief that the latter is a mere function of the former. The condition of the mind depends upon that of the brain; the strength of the mind depends on the size of the brain; the brain, like other organs, subject to the control of the will, must have rest a third or a fourth part of every day; the mind decays with old age; the brain is worn away by the exercise of the mind; when the mind is excited, the brain requires an unusually large supply of blood; and over-exertion of the mind causes pain in the head. All these facts furnish strong evidence of the immediate connection of the thinking power with the encephalic matter. Upon the theory that the mind is the function of the brain, we can explain all the mental operations as well, at least, as by any other means, while, if we adopt a contrary supposition, we become involved at once in a multitude of serious difficulties. Dreaming is explained very satisfactorily by supposing that part of the brain is asleep, and part in action; and it cannot be explained at all, if the functional nature of the mind be denied: for dreaming is evidently a mental operation. The same remarks may be made of somnambulism, and cases of "double-consciousness." The phenomena of "unconscious cerebration," as Carpenter styles it, can be explained only on this theory. The most prominent of these facts is that the mind thinks unconsciously. Thus scholars frequently lay aside unfinished problems or dissertations for a few weeks, and in the mean time occupy themselves with other matter; and when they return to their former labors, they find that their ideas are much clearer than while they were at work previously. The brain has been thinking on the

old train of ideas in the meantime, while the man has not been aware of any such operation.

Against all this evidence, no rebutting testimony of any scientific weight can be adduced, not a particle worthy of a moment's attention. The works of the natural philosophers may be sought through in the vain search for any such testimony. "No physiologist," says Carpenter, "could venture to deny, in the face of the crowd of facts, which force themselves on his attention, that all mental operations are inextricably linked with vital [material] changes in the nervous system."

§ 163. If the mind be a function of the brain, it follows as a matter of course, that it must expire with its organ. All functional activity and existence in the animal kingdom depend upon the animal life of the organs. When the eye is out, there is no sight; when the auditory nerve is destroyed, there is no hearing; when the muscles are cut to pieces, there is no physical strength; when the liver is dead, there is no secretion of bile; and we may safely say, that, when the brain dies, the mind dies with it, and dies forever. The grave is an eternal sleep.

§ 164. That a contrary doctrine prevails extensively among civilized nations, and that powerful religious interests and vulgar prejudices are interested in sustaining it, are facts known to all; but nevertheless, before such contrary doctrine can obtain any scientific foundation, it must overthrow not only the analogies heretofore referred to, but also other analogies drawn from physiology, and the domain of nature.

§ 165. If the soul live after the death of the brain, it must exist either with, or without the body. In the former case, how should the body be recalled to life? How should all its scattered particles be collected? Suppose that the scene of a battle had been turned into a wheat-field, and that the matter which formed the blood, flesh, and bones of the soldiers, fills the heads of the grain, and thence is transformed into bread and into the systems of thousands of other men, who die with that matter in their bodies—to which man would the matter belong, the first, or the second owner? And suppose there were a dozen owners? The slaughter of Waterloo served to enrich not that field alone;

Digitized by Google

the bones were carried across the channel, and the Englishman grew strong again on the remains of his brother. In cases of famine, in shipwrecks and sieges, where men have eaten human flesh, digested it, and shortly afterwards died —to whom would the flesh belong in the other life? When do the atoms collect? and where? What becomes of the body? Does it remain on earth imperceptible to mortal senses, or does it bid defiance to the laws of gravity, and fly off to another planet? Does it wander about naked, hungry, and shelterless, or is it furnished with food, clothing, and houseroom by some mysterious arrangements of Providence, intelligible only to the perspicacious minds of the elect? Do those who were infants, cripples, and men in second childhood, when physical death overtook them, become capable of moving about with ease? A thousand other questions, which should be answered, if we are to believe the existence of the mind in connection with the body in another life, might be asked, and never can be answered reasonably.

§ 166. But it may be said that the soul exists independently of the body, after death. If so, it must be such an "existence" as is now unknown to us. There are but two classes of "existences" known to philosophy and science—matter, and its qualities or conditions. Every existence belongs to one or the other of these classes. Time, eternity, space, forces, laws, and motions are the conditions and qualities of matter, without which they do not and can not exist. It was at one time supposed that heat, electricity, and light were "immaterial substances;" but it is now pretty well established that they are only peculiar oscillations or conditions of matter. If the mind exist after death independently of the body and brain, we must suppose it to be immaterial—that is a "thing" which is neither matter, nor a quality of matter, and which has no analogical relative in nature. It may be asserted that it has a related essence in God; but science and positive philosophy have never been able to discover God, much less to determine what his "essence" is: and the adoption of the wild suppositions of the theologians in opposition to the firmly established facts of science, would be much like philosophic suicide.

Digitized by Google

§ 167. Again, all known forces are qualities of matter. The mind is a force, and as such should likewise be a quality of matter. Scientific investigation has never discovered force, of any kind whatever, which existed of, for, and by itself. Every known force depends upon matter, and its strength is measured, as a general rule, by the amount of the matter in which it is generated. No force exists without matter, and no matter without force. Animal force, chemical force, and mechanical force are all alike in this respect; all depend upon matter for their existence, and upon the amount of their matter for their strength; and we have no evidence to justify the assertion that mental force forms an exception to the rule.

§ 168. Every thought in life is accompanied by a change in matter, and every action of any force implies such a change. Mind is a force, and exists, and manifests its existence only in thought. Now, what reason can we find for believing that it shall think and act in another life without those material changes which invariably accompany its thought and action here? No such reason can be found in the domain of science.

§ 169. The existence of mind necessarily implies animal life. We never have seen, or in any way perceived a thinking being, which was not an animal, possessed of a material body and a nervous system, and subject to that peculiar kind of combustion, which we call animal life; nor have we any scientific evidence, any clear philosophic evidence, any evidence at all, to justify us in supposing that a mind can exist without animal life, or that there is any other kind of animal life than that recognized in our physiologies.

§ 170. Man, during mortal life, can not think without brain. Shall it be different after death? Shall the dissolution of the body set the function free as from a prison? What virtue is there in death to release the mind from dependence for its sanity on the health, for its strength on the size, and for its existence on the animal organization and activity of the encephalon? Shall the man possess memory and intelligence beyond the grave without Cerebrum, and consciousness without Sensory Ganglia? Shall he see without eyes at all, when a mere bandage, over them here, makes him blind? Shall he hear without ears, smell without nose,

Digitized by Google

move without muscles, and talk without tongue? Or shall he live in utter darkness, loneliness, and quietude, unable to communicate with any thing beyond himself, and sit forever thinking of nothing? Shall the passions which are portions of the mind here, and which act only to demand gratification for physical wants,—shall they be active without reference to a material body? Shall the faculties which are necessary in earthly struggles, find a new sphere of action in the field beyond the Styx? Do the other animal functions, as well as the mind, exist independently of their organs? Do they journey together to the Elysian Fields? Do they, which were here united by the bonds of a material body, preserve their partnership there, or do they separate, and each go prowling about, seeking whom it may devour? Have the souls of brutes admittance to the human heaven? Are the apes admitted into genteel society? Do the defunct pursue the same occupations, are they governed by the same tastes as when in mortal life? Does the sainted cat chase, and tear, and torture the sainted mouse? Does the dog still worship the man, or is new light furnished in the higher spheres, so that he sees the imperfections of the featherless biped, and the folly of canimorphism? Are the sublimated souls dependent for their happiness upon mental occupation, and what is the subject of their thoughts and studies? Do they love and hate, fear and hope? Do they read the morning papers, and worship tailors? Alas! tell me, how do they live, ye who know so much of their existence!

§ 171. But if the soul be immortal, is it not rather singular that the immortality had a beginning? Would not such an immortality be somewhat like an eternity with one end cut off? And surely, nobody will assert that he lived in his present selfhood, before he was begotten by his parents in the flesh. And without his present selfhood, *he* could not have existed before. He was not himself, if, previous to his life, he had an existence, of which he now knows nothing.

§ 172. Some authors, particularly physiologists, who have seen the utter impossibility of denying the absolute dependence of the intellectual powers on the brain * have

* WIGAN, GARTH WILKINSON, and others.

Digitized by Google

argued that the mind and the soul are distinct, and that the latter is immortal, while the former dies with the body. They have, however, failed to tell us what the soul, as they conceive it, is ; they have failed to tell us whether it manifests itself in this life,—whether there is any proof of its existence ; they have failed to tell us, whether it can think, and remember, see, hear, and feel ; they have failed to tell us the proof that its powers and qualities, and the manners of its action are such as they think. This whole theory of the possession of a soul by man, independent of both mind and body, is too absurd to deserve an argument. It is the last turn of the doomed hare of immortality.

§ 173. The evidences which the theologians advance as proof of the future life, are man's desire for immortality, his curiosity to know the cause and end of his existence, his conceptions of perfection—implying the existence of such perfection—his tendency to connect himself with a personal deity, and an invisible world, and the necessity of a future life in which divine justice, whose requirements are not observed in this, shall be vindicated in rewards and punishments. As to the longing for immortality, I deny that there is any feeling in the human mind, except as the creature of superstition. Many nations have existed for centuries without the belief of another life ; and many of the present day have no expectation that their thinking powers will continue to exist after the death of the Cerebrum. Man has naturally no such longing ; his greatest longings are for happiness and sympathy on earth, and in those cases at least he generally finds that his longings do not furnish proof that they will be gratified. Man longs for pleasure, but he does not get it here ; why should he believe that he will get it elsewhere ? If longing may serve for proof of another life, it may prove also the conditions of that life, and one of the first conditions would be infinite and endless joy for all. The Christians may assert that this longing takes such a shape in their minds that they are certain—by an inward consciousness—that they will live forever. But this assertion is belied by their whole conduct ; they fear death as the king of terrors, and they can have little faith in another life, or they could not be so selfish, mean, and tyrannical to their weaker brethren, as they

Digitized by Google

are. If man had a longing for immortality, it would be as good proof for immortality in this life as in another.

We may conceive of a future state which might be the scene of endless pleasure and joy, intense beyond our present capacities and conceptions, indeed perfect, and if there were a possibility of our attaining such a condition we could not but hope for it, and look forward to it as an abundant recompense for the temporary sufferings of this life. The poet says that,

> "If, as holiest men have deemed, there be
> A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
> To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
> And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
> How sweet it were in concert to adore
> With those who made our mortal labors light!
> To hear each voice we feared to hear no more!
> Behold each mighty shade revealed to sight,
> The Bactrian, Samian, sage, and all who taught the right!"

Sweet indeed it would be; but if as most Christian men have deemed, nine-tenths of the human race go to hell, how bitter 't would be to find one's self there! And perhaps it were not entirely sweet to find one's-self in heaven, and to discover that all one's dearest relatives and friends, and the greatest benefactors of the human race, were broiling in the fiery furnace below, in full sight of their writhings and in full hearing of their groans!

Curiosity for a knowledge of the causes and ends of existence can scarcely serve as evidence of a future life—especially while men are making so much progress as at present in this life in gratifying that curiosity.

But it is said that divine justice is not satisfied in this world, and a future life with rewards and punishments is necessary for the settlement of the accounts of good and evil, run up by man while in the flesh. I shall elsewhere attempt to prove that there is no personal divinity, as this argument would assume, and that, if there were, man's actions could be directly traceable to him, and therefore not punishable by him. If there be any assumption at all that justice must be done, the reasonable presumption is that the doing must take place where the evil is committed—and the assumption that justice will be done in another life, merely because it is not done in this, is most unreasonable.

Digitized by Google

"Are * there any marks of a distributive justice in the world? If you answer in the affirmative I conclude that, since justice here exerts itself, it is satisfied. If you reply in the negative, I conclude that you have then no reason to ascribe justice in our sense of it to the Gods. If you hold a medium between affirmation and negation, by saying that the justice of the Gods at present exerts itself in part, but not in its full extent, I answer that you have no reason to give it any particular extent, but only so far as you see it at present exert itself."

We have thus looked at all the testimony, worthy of note, for and against the dogma of the soul's immortality. That the evidence is all on the negative side, must, I think, be clear to every one. In the chapter on the *Natural History of the Biblical Doctrines* I have endeavored to show how the dogma arose and was sustained: and the history of physiology will contain the record of its fall. It was a bold and wonderful conception, and has served as a keystone for all the great creeds manufactured in the last twenty centuries, but mankind shall soon see the day when it will be reckoned among the cast-off garments, which the human soul has outgrown and found to be no longer wearable.

* Hume.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVI.

PANTHEISM VS. ANTHROPOMORPHISM

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is and God the soul;
> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze
> Glows in the stars and blossoms in the trees,
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent."—POPE.

§ 174. The Bible indirectly asserts, or is said to assert, the existence of an anthropomorphic deity called Jehovah, who is personal, conscious, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, self-existent, and independent of all other existence —who has or is a mind with thoughts and feelings similar to those of mankind—who created the material universe out of nothing by an act of his volition, and who now governs it by his will.

The belief in some anthropomorphic deity or deities, more or less similar to the Christian conception of Jehovah prevails, and for many ages has prevailed, among the greater portion of the human race. I deny the existence of such an anthropomorphism, and shall endeavor to show that belief in it is contradicted by many well-known principles of philosophy and science, and that its alleged evidences are mere assumptions.

§ 175. The *first* assumption of the anthropomorphists is, that because the mechanism of a watch proves that it was constructed by an intelligent personal maker, therefore, the much more wonderful mechanism of the universe and its various parts, proves that it was made by an intelligent personal divine creator. This assumption is the great, and it may be said, the only evidence which the Christian theologians have of the existence of their personal deity. Paley's *Natural Theology*, which is the best work on the anthropomorphic side of the question, is occupied almost exclusively with this assumption.

The argument from design, as proof of a personal designer, implies that we see a necessary connection between

cause and effect, whereas it is a well-known philosophic principle that we can see no such necessary connection.* We can discover only that one natural phenomenon is invariably followed by another; and we call the former "cause" and the latter "effect." We can discover only the sequence, not the absolute necessity of it. We may discover intermediate causes, and when we do so, we find in them the "why" of natural phenomena, but as for the relation between the cause and its immediate effect we are as blind as ever so far as necessary connection is concerned. If we see something new we can not have any knowledge of its qualities or effects by mere *a priori* reasoning; and the only means we have of obtaining such knowledge is by arguing from the qualities and effects of other substances to which the new thing appears to bear an analogy. If we have never seen anything to which it is in any way analogous, then we can have no knowledge of its qualities or effects, until we have learned them by experiment.

Now let us apply this principle to the assumption under consideration. We argue from the watch to the human maker, because we have often seen men, we know that they work according to certain rules which we call design, and we are familiar with their works. But if we argue that Gods work according to similar rules, we make an assumption which has no warrant in philosophy. No man has ever seen, or in any way perceived a God, or any work known to proceed from the hand of a God. To assert that Gods work according to design as man do, is indeed to assume the whole question at issue—whether there be a personal God. The apparent design in nature is admitted by all pantheists, but they assert that so far as we know the design exists only in our minds. We perceive a harmony between the processes of our thoughts and the processes of nature, and forgetting that we are products of nature, we measure her by ourselves. "Man designs, nature † is;" "the adaptation of means to ends," says Kant, "was brought into the world by man's reflection, which

* This principle is admitted by the anthropomorphists. See BROUGHAM'S Natural Theology, Note III. There has been no attempt to refute Hume's great argument on the subject.

† H. G. ATKINSON. Man's Nature and Development.

Digitized by Google

was then astonished at the wonders itself had created." Design implies the use of means for the attainment of ends; whereas we must suppose that an omnipotent and perfect being (if we are to argue about his existence and nature on assumptions from our own constitution as the anthropomorphists insist) would attain his ends without the use of means—that in fact his thought of the end, and the desire of its attainment would be its attainment.

But if the adaptation of means to ends be so apparent in the universe, what is the end of its creation? We can not judge that the adaptation of means is good unless we know the end in view. So far as I know, God is represented by theologians as having only one purpose in the creation of the universe, and that is his own glory. Jonathan Edward's expresses part of the Christian doctrine when he says that Jehovah "glorifies himself in the damnation of the ungodly men."* The Bible says (*Prov. XVI*, 4), "The Lord hath made all things for himself—yea even the wicked for his glory." On this doctrine John Adams † comments thus: "He created this speck of dirt and the human species for his glory; and with the deliberate design of making nine-tenths of our species miserable forever for his glory. This is the doctrine of Christian theologians, in general ten to one. Now, my friend, can prophecies or miracles convince you or me that infinite benevolence, wisdom or power, created and preserves for a time innumerable millions to make them miserable for ever for his own glory? Wretch! What is his glory? Is he ambitious? Does he want promotion? Is he vain, tickled with adulation, exalting and triumphing in his power and the sweetness of his vengeance?" Perhaps the Christians will say that their opinions are misrepresented here; but where shall we find them represented truly? If they pretend to find in the universe a wonderful adaptation of means to ends, they must tell what the great end is. Will they confess that any end, which they can imagine, implies an absurdity? Does their creator intend to furnish them with proof of his

* Sermon entitled "The Torments of the wicked in Hell no occasion of grief to the Saints in Heaven."

† Letter to Jefferson, Sept. 14 1813

Digitized by Google

existence and nature in his works, and yet leave no purpose perceptible in creation ?

§176. The *second* assumption is, that the forces inherent in matter, inseparable from it, and generated by it, can not suffice to explain all the phenomena of nature. This assumption is not only wanting in every kind of evidence to support it, but it is in direct contradiction to the whole teachings of natural philosophy. Science is "the region * of universal law." She asserts that the law reigns throughout the universe, that every natural phenomena occurs under a law, as the effect of a sufficient natural cause, and she denies most emphatically the existence of any force, which is not inherent in matter. Science recognises no supernatural force, and wherever she has seen the superstition of the supernatural entrench itself in a stronghold, she has laid siege at once, and has succeeded in blowing it up, or, at least, she maintains a rigorous blockade, varied with occasional fierce assaults, which can not fail to be successful at last. She was told that every natural occurrence is the immediate act of a supernatural anthropomorphism, and she proved the assertion false in a vast number of instances. She was told that there are no forces inherent in matter, and she proved the assertion false. She was told that there are no natural laws, and she proved that there are such laws. She was told that rain falls, because Jove wills it, and she proved that rain falls, because vapor is condensed in the air. She was told that Jehovah made the rainbow by an immediate act of his will ; she proved that the rainbow is the necessary result of the qualities of light and water. She was told that the earth was fashioned in its present shape by the hand of Elohim ; she proved that it had grown to its present shape without help from any hand. She was told that the power of an omnipotent anthropomorphism was shown in the government of the motions of the heavenly bodies ; she proved that those motions are governed by the power of gravitation. She was told that God made the universe as it is ; she proved that the universe had whirled itself into shape. She was told that the present animal and vegetable kingdoms were commenced

* J. D. MORELL.

Digitized by Google

and turned out complete in one day from the workshop of Elohim; she proved that they attained their present position by growth, from lower conditions, as gradual as the development of the man from the child. She was told that God made man a living soul, and breathed into him the breath of life, and she proved that there is no force or power in man which is not the necessary result of his material organization; that there is nothing in his material organization which does not belong to the mineral kingdom, and that in his growth there is no evidence of any supernatural power, or of any power, except such as is inherent in matter. Supernaturalism has seen ten thousand of her strongholds destroyed, while she has never gained the smallest victory; and she has no reason whatever to hope that the future will be more favorable to her than the past. Wherever superstition has asserted that it saw the hand of a personal God, there science has shown that the hand of God was not, and that the hand of the natural law was. She has proved that force is inherent in all matter, and inseparable from it; indeed, that matter is conceivable and discoverable only by its conditions, qualities, and forces. She traces force above force, and law above law, following up the chain of causes through thousands of links; but instead of discovering, or even approaching an anthropomorphic deity, she removes further from the conception of him every year, until it has become proverbial, that of three natural philosophers, it may be safely assumed that two are atheists—that is, unbelievers in anthropomorphism. Natural philosophy spoke her opinion truly through La Grange, when he asserted: "I have searched through the universe for a God, but in vain." Science believes in, and worships no God, save the natural forces, and the universal law. She has sworn eternal and unrelenting hostility to all sects which do not bow to her divinity, and she is now engaged in a successful war of extermination against all forms of supernaturalistic superstition. She asserts that every natural phenomenon is the effect of a natural cause; and although she is not able in many cases to tell what that cause is, or, if she know the cause, to explain its mode of operation, she can at least appeal for the truth of her assertion to the corroborative testimony of a thousand analogies, knowing well

Digitized by Google

that the supernaturalists can produce no evidence, either direct or indirect, in support of their theories.

§ 177. The *third* assumption of the anthropomorphists is that the dominion of universal natural law, and a personal governor of the universe, are compatible with each other. If there be universal and invariable natural laws, as science says there are, then they govern all natural phenomena, and there is no room for the influence of a deity. If these laws have prevailed throughout matter since the origin of the universe, then the divine anthropomorphism can do nothing except, perhaps, wind up the great machine like an eight-day clock. If these laws are eternal, as science says they are, then he could wind his clock but once. The employment of natural laws and forces implies finitude in the creator, if there be one. Man uses secondary means, because he has not the power to do all his work directly ; and if we are to argue from human analogies to the existence of a God, we must suppose, that, when he uses laws and forces as his agents, he does so because he finds them necessary as aids in the management of an extensive and complicated establishment.

§ 178. The *fourth* assumption is that the universe and the different classes of natural objects, more particularly living beings, *must* owe their original *creation* to a designing personality. Most of those who make this assumption admit that all the present phenomena of nature occur by the influence of natural forces under natural laws, but they say that the blind forces could never have produced thinking beings. It is upon "thinking beings," animals, &c., that the anthropomorphists now specially rely, for it has been pretty well established that all the changes and conditions in the mineral kingdom can be entirely accounted for by the principles of science. They argue that the cause must be greater than the effect, that the cause must contain the effect within itself: and they assert that the forces of dead matter do not comprise consciousness, sensation, thought and wisdom. But this last assertion is not justified by facts. We have no reason to assume that our consciousness is greater than the forces which pervade the rocks and seas and clouds. Suppose we take a fresh egg and examine it. There is nothing in it but such elements as are known

Digitized by Google

to chemistry—but such elements as are found in earth water and air: and these elements have no power or qualities except such as they would have in the mineral condition. The egg has neither sensation nor consciousness. It is as dead as the pebble from the seashore or the rain-drop from heaven. We place that egg in a warm place, where it is subjected only to natural influences, without the interference of any supernatural power, and a chick is produced which has sensation, consciousness and thought. It follows that the natural forces in the egg with the aid of external heat must have been greater than consciousness and sensation. Now man is only a chicken of higher development: his sensation, consciousness and thought are not radically different from those of the feathered biped; and we can trace his generation as we can that of the chick. Every portion of his system is mineral, and his mineral elements possess none save natural forces — operating differently indeed from any process in the mineral kingdom, because the arrangement of the particles is different. But the pantheistic evidence does not stop here. It is not only probable that there are no supernatural forces in man because we can discover none, but it is as good as proved that those manifestations of thought, supposed to be superior to the blind forces of nature, are traceable directly to the latter as their cause. Electricity is evolved in thinking, and every thought is accompanied by a change of matter, such as accompanies, and indeed necessarily causes electrical action. The brain is a galvanic battery and the mind is its peculiar power. Thought is not greater than the flash of lightning in the sky: they are different developments of the same force. It may be considered a scientific certainty that gravity, electricity, magnetism, galvanism, affinity and the mental power are only different modes of action of the same natural force*, which pervades all matter, is inherent in it, inseparable from it, coëxistent with it from all eternity and to all eternity, and the only cause of all natural phenomena. It produces crystals, dew drops, turnips and chicks to-day from rude matter; and we know that it might have given shape to the globe and to the uni-

* CARPENTER. Hum. Phys. § 120.—GROVE. Correlation of the Physical Forces.

verse, as we are well satisfied that it did, though we were not eye-witnesses of the process. We have no reason whatever to assume that the matter which exists now, was once non-existent, that the forces, which pervade it now did not always pervade it, or that the causes, which now suffice to produce all the changes in nature, did not always suffice.

§ 179. The *fifth* assumption is that when the chain of causes arrives at a God, it must stop there. If we are to reason from the phenomena of nature, according to the analogies of human works, until we arrive at a divine anthropomorphism, must we not go on and argue that that divinity is the effect of a greater one? If man must have had a personal creator because the watch had one, will not the same argument prove that the creator of man must have had a creator likewise and so on in an endless chain? And if we assume that gods are like men in working according to design, may we not also assume that, like men, they propagate their species? What is there in our *knowledge* of the divine essence and nature to justify us in asserting that Gods are this and are not that? To assert that a God is perfect and therefore self-existent, and necessarily without parentage, is to assume that our imperfect minds can appreciate perfection in works; for unless the works be perfect we have no right to assume that the workman is. If we are consistent, after adopting the belief in a God, we must admit that he is only the descendant of an endless line of creators or progenitors.

§ 180. The *sixth* assumption is that there is only one author of natural phenomena. The anthropomorphists say that the harmony of nature is proof that everything was created by one divinity. But when they assert that nature is harmonious, they assert what is notoriously false. Nature is not harmonious. The whole universe appears to be the scene of an endless strife. Evil pervades every part of the earth. Wherever there is sensation, there is pain. Hostile feelings and hostile interests wage fierce and grievous war with each other not only in the bosoms of individual men, and between societies of men, but also among the brutes. The land, the sea, and the air are full of strife and torture and murderous death. An endless cry of woe is heard throughout all nature. One half of the animal crea-

Digitized by Google

tion is made so that it is compelled to murder the other half,—so that its pleasure consits in the sight of the torture of the other half. The history of humanity is a continuous picture of crime and suffering, and a correct description of the nations of the earth as they now are, would show, that one third of the human race obtain most of what they consider their comforts and pleasures by robbing and rendering miserable the other two-thirds. When I look at the record of the tyranny, the slavery, persecution, and superstitions which have prevailed among men, am I to find in them the evidences of the glorious harmony of nature, proofs of the goodness and infinite love of the author of the universe?

That the structure of the sound eye is wonderfully curious, and apparently adapted with skill far beyond that of man, to a purpose, I admit; but what shall I say of the eye which is blind? Does that exhibit design? If design be evident in healthy and intelligent adult men, where is the design in disease? Where is the design in that arrangement of nature by which a large proportion of the children born die before arriving at physical or mental maturity? Where is the design in abortions? Where is the design in the constitution of those women who are keenly susceptible to the attractions of love, but who are so formed that maternity is certain death to them? Who is it that shall set forth the wisdom and excellence of idiocy, malformation and insanity? If the various qualities, powers and beauty of the tender infant, the lovely girl, the ambitious youth, the loving mother, the great and good man demonstrate the existence of a perfectly wise and good God as their creator, what shall we think of the earthquake of Lisbon in 1755, destroying 20,000 such men, women and children at one blow. Did the joy and smiles which filled the city one hour before the event come from the same God who made the misery, excruciating torture and dying groans which followed? If so, the anthropomorphists must abandon their human analogies for once at least.

As the theologians argue from certain natural phenomena, according to human analogies, until they arrive at a personal deity, we may with as much reason argue from other natural phenomena of an entirely different nature, according to the same analogies, until we arrive at a differ-

Digitized by Google

ent deity. If love and peace, wisdom and healthy animal organization are the proofs of a good god, why are not war, and hate, animal disease, and malformation, the proofs of an evil god? When we see a large and elegant steamship, and are told that it and all its parts came originally from England, we infer that coal-miners, iron-miners, iron-founders, iron-forgers, lumbermen, sawyers, ship-carpenters, joiners, cabinet-makers, blacksmiths, painters, glass-makers, brass-founders, and a thousand other species of mechanics, who, as we know, aid in the construction and furnishing of steamships, must live there. Now, here is this universe, composed of parts, infinitely more varied and wonderful, and why shall we believe that it was made by one mechanic? When we examine the steamship carefully, and find that one portion of the joiner-work is done very well, and another very poorly, we say that different mechanics were at work here: one of them was a good workman, and another was not so good. If, after we had looked through this steamship, a person should tell us that it had been built by one man alone, and that his only reason for the assertion was the evident harmony of all its parts—that harmony implying the agency of but one mind—who would believe him? Would any sane man believe that the same mechanic had cut the trees, dug the coal, and smelted the iron ore? And yet men like ourselves, assert most positively, reasoning as they pretend from human analogies, and knowing nothing more than they can learn by such reasoning, that the same anthropomorphism makes the still-born and the live-born child, the healthy and the sick man, the well-formed man and the cripple, the philanthropist and the professional murderer, the master and the slave, the cat and the mouse, the wheat-field and the cholera, the quadruped, the bird, the fish, the snake, the shell-fish, the insect, the tree, the shrub, the sea-weed, the air, the water, the crystal, the aqueous and igneous rocks, the earth, the sun, the moon, and all the planets, stars, and comets. If we argue from the various phenomena of nature to their creation by mind, we should believe *that* mind to be in a vast number of beings, very different from each other in moral and intellectual character.

§ 181. The *seventh* assumption is that matter exists ab-

Digitized by Google

solutely, and independently of our minds, whereas it will hereafter be shown that we have no evidence of any such fact. We *think* that we perceive matter, but in reality we perceive only a thought of matter ; and whether the matter conceived by the thought really exists, or whether the matter be such as we perceive it, are questions for which we can obtain no solution. But unless it be proved that matter exist absolutely, how are we to argue from it to the absolute existence of its creator? If the matter exists only in our perception then God must exist there too, and he is no more than the hallucination which passes through the brain of a madman.

§ 182. The *eighth* assumption is that truth exists independently of man, and is discoverable by him. But we know that there is no truth except in the harmony of a proposition with our modes of thought. There is no truth in any proposition taken by itself. Then it follows that truth is merely a relative matter,—the creation, it may be said, of our own minds,—and God is reduced to a rank beneath ourselves. We make him, and then try to prove that he made us. He is at best a merely relative existence,—first me, then God. The nature of the existence of matter and truth will be considered further in a subsequent chapter.

§ 183. The *ninth* assumption is that infinity and personality may coexist in the same being. "You give," says Fichte, "personality and consciousness to your God. What do you mean by 'personality' and 'consciousness?' certainly such qualities as you have found in yourselves, and marked with these names. But that they necessarily imply limitation and finite condition in their possessor, must appear clear to you, if you pay the least attention to the nature of the ideas attached to them. By making God conscious and personal, you make him finite and like yourselves, and you have not thought a God, as you intended, but only an image of yourselves." "We feel and know ourselves to be persons," adds Strauss,* "only as distinct from other similar persons outside of us, from whom we are separated as finite beings. Formed in and for this domain of finitude only, the word 'personality' loses every

* Christliche Glaubenslehre, § 33.

Digitized by Google

meaning beyond it. A being which has no other like it beyond itself, can not be a person. To speak of a personal divinity or a divine personality, appears from this point of view as a connection of ideas which exclude and annihilate each other. Personality is a self-hood fenced in against outsiders; absoluteness, on the contrary, is the comprehensive, unlimited, infinite, which excludes all personality."

§ 184. The *tenth* assumption is that creation is consistent with perfection and infinity. Creation implies that God felt a want, that he changed his purpose, that his mind became subject to the influence of new ideas, that at a particular moment he felt the necessity of doing what he had never done before—in short that he was not perfect.

§ 185. The *eleventh* assumption is that a personal divinity exists in some place while we can prove that he does not exist in any place within our reach. Here is a lump of coal. Will any of the anthromorphists assert that their divinity resides in it? If they will, I can prove the falsity of their assertion by scientific means. I can crush and burn, and weigh and examine and analyse it in a thousand different processes, but can find no mark of a personal or conscious God residing in it. Since personality and consciousness, as men understand the words, are always discoverable by certain signs not to be found in the coal, I conclude that no personal and conscious being resides in it. And I can go through all the earth in the same way, proving that the anthropomorphic God is not there. Where is he then? When I can prove that he is not in anything on earth, shall I believe, without direct or indirect evidence of the fact, that he is in some other portion of the universe? Why should he not be here as much as elsewhere? Shall I imagine that he dwells elsewhere, merely because I can prove that he does not dwell here?

§ 186. The *twelfth* assumption of the anthromorphists is that we can believe in their personal deity, independent of matter, consistently with the analogies of nature, consistently with the facts that we do not *know* of any existence save that of matter and its dependent qualities, that we *know* of no force which is not generated in matter, that we *know* of nothing which possesses life without material organization, that we *know* of nothing which possesses mind

without a material nervous system, that we *know* of nothing which can think without a change of matter, and that we *know* of nothing which can see and hear without eyes and ears.

§ 187. Such are the assumptions on which the anthromorphist founds his faith, and with which he proves it; and most of them are absolutely necessary to his system. Other testimony he has none. The pantheist on the other hand makes no assumptions, but is ready to furnish sound and incontrovertible evidence for every principle which he advances.

§ 188. He says that matter and its properties or conditions are the only existences; that they have ever existed and will for ever exist, that the principal of these properties are forces which pervade every portion of the universe; that these forces are inherent in matter, inseparable from it, portion of its essence, and that they have given to it its present shape; that they govern it and produce all the phenomena of nature; that they act according to universal and invariable laws; that they are the soul of the universe; and that they arrive at consciousness only in the animal kingdom. They are the authors of all that is. They hold the stars in their places, swing the planets in their orbits and lead the solar system in its course through the universe. They create light and heat in the sun; they give life and motion to the earth; they lighten and thunder in the storm; they blow in the breezes; they keep the waters from stagnation; they rush madly over the precipice in the waterfall and burst from the bosom of the earth in the fires of the volcano; they roar in the torrent and murmur in the brook; they collect particles of carbon and crystallize them into the diamond; they embody themselves in the grand forms of the monster cypress, and pine tree of the Sierra Nevada; they show their capabilities of color and perfume in the flowers of the meadow; they give sensation to the worm, industry to the ant, intelligence to the bird and quadruped, masculine energy to the man, beauty to the woman, wisdom to the sage, eloquence to the orator, sublimity to the poet, and love to all the conscious beings of nature. They are the speed of the hare, the grace of the gazelle, the strength of the lion, the faithfulness of the dog, the courage of the

Digitized by Google

warrior, the dovotion of the martyr, the light of the day, and the darkness of the night. They rejoice in the beautiful harvest, the warm sunshine, the refreshing breeze ; they rage in the battles, plagues, floods, and famines. They are the soul of all that is, of all that has been, of all that will be. Beyond them, there is nothing. They are subject to no dominion ; all existence is subject to them. They demand no worship ; they are deaf to all prayer ; they will be appeased by no sacrifice. They teach man to live for this life alone, and to recognize no duty except toward himself, or his fellowmen. They inspired their worshipper, when he wrote :

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 't is her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy ; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings." *

* WORDSWORTH. Poem on Revisiting Tintern Abbey.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVII.

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.

"The strongest motive always governs."

§ 189. "Sin" is defined to mean a violation of a law prescribed by an anthropomorphic God, as "vice" is the violation of moral law, and "crime" a violation of criminal law. Christian philosophers assert that sin includes all kinds of vice; and they assert also that all sins will be punished by everlasting pains in hell, unless they are excused according to Paul's platform. On the other hand I say, that, if there were such an anthropomorphic divinity, which I deny, he could not in justice punish man for any of his actions. Men have a right to inflict pain as a preventive of crime; but they have no right to inflict it for any other purpose. And the punishments, which they inflict, are very different in principle and effect from a hell, which, if it exists, being unseen, can not exercise its proper influence in preventing violations of the laws, and necessarily takes the character of a place where God gratifies his vengeance rather than vindicates his justice.

§ 190. Every man has a character of his own—a mental constitution, distinct, peculiar, and different from that of all other men. No two are precisely alike. Men born and bred together, under the same circumstances, are different from each other: one is brave, another cowardly; one is talented, another stupid; one is magnanimous, another mean. Their mental constitutions differ. The grand fact is that they have peculiar mental constitutions,—individual characters. Now, whence came those constitutions? Did each man make his own mind? Was it given to him by any person, for whose acts he is responsible? Or was it not born with him? Does it not depend for its nature and powers upon the brain? That personal character has great influence on a man's actions, no one will deny. A cowardly man does cowardly acts; a brave man does brave acts; a good man

Digitized by Google

does good, a mean man commits base actions. Men are not mean, brave, generous, etc., because they perform mean, brave, and generous actions; but these actions are the consequences, the effect, the expression of a positive character: and that character does not change with the actions, but remains substantially the same through life. A cowardly man may, under the influence of an extraordinary impulse, perform a brave action, but that does not make him brave; his character remains the same as it was before. A man's actions are influenced not by his character only, but also by external circumstances. Thus, if A. enter a crowd, and begin to strike right and left, B., who is a coward, will run, and C., who is brave, will stand and resist. No human action can be imagined which is not governed entirely and alone by personal character and external circumstances. But both these are beyond the control of the individual. A man can not become more or less brave, wise, generous, firm, prudent than he is. Among the many human inventions, there is none for altering a man's mental constitution. There is no imaginable process of hoping, praying, willing, or striving of any value for such a purpose. A man may change his position, but he can not change external circumstances. He may keep company with good, or bad men, but he can not, by a mere effort of mind, make them different from what they are. How then, since his actions are governed entirely by his character, and by external circumstances, both of them beyond his own control, how is he to be held responsible for those actions by a being who made the character and the circumstances? But suppose that an exceptional case be found where an apparent change has taken place in a man's character,—that change must have been caused to a great extent by external circumstances, aided by forces existing in his own mind, which bore within itself the power to alter its mode of action; and therefore, the change is not in itself a matter of merit or demerit.

Man is the slave of motives. He never acts without motive; the very meaning of the word "motive" implies impulse to action. He must act with motives, and he can not act contrary to them. But a man's motives are not under his control. I have a hunger-impulse, a hate-impulse, a love-impulse, and other impulses which furnish the mo-

Digitized by Google

tives for my action, and which I can not get rid of, neither can I always determine with what strength they shall present their impulses. The strongest motive always governs. He who feels hungry, and has a palateable dish within his reach, and has no motive for not eating then and there, must eat, as a matter of necessity. Men cannot create motives by their will, and therefore are not responsible for their motives. In short, the will is governed by the mental constitution, and not the mind by the will.

§ 191. The purpose of all action is self-gratification. Every action is caused by a motive: every motive is the demand of a passion for gratification: every passion is part of the mind, part of the self. This man has a base mind; a mind in which base passions predominate; he has base motives, and commits base actions. His mental constitution tells him to be regardless of the pleasures of other men; to grasp greedily for everything which may conduce to his own immediate comfort. His neighbor has a magnanimous soul, magnanimous passions: his motives are generous, his actions are noble. He finds by experience that he has more pleasure in rendering others happy, than in looking merely after his own bodily comfort. He is generous not for the sake of making others happy, but because to make others happy, is to make himself happy; because the consciousness of having been generous, is one of his keenest pleasures, because the impulse to delight in the consciousness of noble actions, and in giving pleasure to others, is stronger in his mind than the desire for a small physical gratification. The martyr who dies at the stake, when he might save his life, and even be elevated to high honor, by deserting his religion, does the act in accordance with the dictates of his own mind; and by so doing gratifies it. He prefers glorious death to inglorious life. The man who jumps into the water, to save a drowning person, does it to gratify himself. He perhaps was present on a previous occasion when a man was drowned, and did nothing to save him; and probably spoke to himself, thus: "The danger is nothing; I do not fear it; to save him would have been a good deed; his death will cause deep pain to his friends and relatives; I might have saved that to them, and given them great joy; had I saved him, he would have always been a most devot-

Digitized by Google

ed friend to me; his sight would have given me joy; the remembrance of the act would be a source of inextinguishable pride and pleasure, so long as I live; I would obtain great credit for doing a brave and noble deed; the knowledge of such an action would follow me, wherever I should go, and confer an imperishable honor on me; and the honor would be in proportion to the danger. The next time, I see a man drowning, I will try to save him, if there be any probability of success." If we imagine that a man can have any purpose in his actions, save self-gratification, we must suppose also that his motives do not come from his passions, or that his passions are not part of himself; or that his will is independent of his passions.

§ 192. Philosophers say that every phenomenon has a cause, and that there is apparently a necessary connection between the cause and its effect. Now, if men's actions be the necessary effects of preëxistent causes, and those causes again the effects of other preëxistent causes, and so on up, mounting beyond the birth of the individual, he cannot be responsible for his actions. He is only a blind link in an endless chain. "According to the principle, which denies necessity, and consequently causes, a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character anywise concerned in his actions, since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as a proof of the depravity of the other."* All those persons who argue that man is morally responsible for his actions to a creator, also argue that that creator is the great First Cause of every thing which exists, the necessary author of every particle of matter, of every movement of matter, of every natural phenomenon, and of every action. But "if† human actions can be traced up by a necessary chain to the Deity, they can never be criminal, on account of the infinite perfection of that Being, from whom they are derived, and who can intend nothing, but what is altogether good and laudable. Or, if they be criminal, we must retract the attribute of perfection which we ascribe to the Deity, and acknowledge him to be the ultimate author of guilt and moral turpitude in all his

* † HUME, Essay on Liberty and Necessity.

Digitized by Google

creatures." And of course, in neither case, could he hold men responsible for their unavoidable actions, of which he was the necessary cause, the original author.

§ 193. Different mental faculties are the functions of different organs, which are distinct parts of the brain: and the strength of the faculty depends on the size of the organ. Thus the size of the organs determines the character of the man, and his character determines his actions: and as he cannot change his organs, or alter his character, so he cannot avoid doing as he does. Some phrenological writers have asserted that the organs were dependent for their size on the strength of the faculties, and not *vice versa*, but this statement is as absurd as it would be to say that the size of a muscle depends on its strength, instead of its strength on its size.

§ 194. Every intelligent man has a theory of duty which his reason teaches him, and his conscience urges him, to observe; and which he desires to observe strictly, but in vain. He feels the struggle between the baser and higher impulses of his nature and he must submit occasionally to see the latter defeated. No man ever did on all occasions successfully resist temptation to do evil, no matter who or what he may have been, or how strongly he desired to do good only. And shall we believe that every man can do what all men would do if they could, and what no man ever did? The idea is absurd. When all men have the power to resist every temptation to do evil, they will no longer be men.

§ 195. The theories of the theologians are founded on the supposition that there is a special mental faculty called the "Will," which has the duty and power to restrain all the evil impulses. But really, in most cases the impulses have more power to restrain the will than the will to restrain the impulses. The will is nothing more than "a vicissitude of the supremacy of the faculties;" * and what the will shall determine to do, depends principally on the strength of the different parts of the mind. If any person suppose that he can govern his processes of thought, let him ask himself whether, when on some occasion, in the presence of a young and beautiful person of the other sex, a desire to possess her has not arisen in his mind,—a desire which

* Vestiges of Creation.

Digitized by Google

would recur to his thoughts in defiance of his most earnest endeavors, by willing to drive it away. The will, acting on behalf of various faculties, may exercise much influence on the thoughts, but is far from having the power to control them. If it had such power, men would banish from their minds the thoughts which cause them to be unhappy. Man is a free agent to a certain extent; he can do as he pleases, but he must please to do what his character dictates. He may be compared to a chained bear: he is the bear, his character is the chain, and external circumstances are the post to which he is fastened.

§ 196. But the Christian deities are not content with threatening eternal and infinite misery for *deeds* done in violation of the alleged divine commands: they threaten similar punishments to those who do not *think* that the orthodox platform is the only safe conveyance to heaven. The Catholic tells me that, unless I believe the Church to be infallible, I shall go to hell; the orthodox Protestant tells me that, unless I believe in three Gods, I shall go to hell; the strict Unitarian tells me that, unless I believe in one God, I shall go to hell; the Mohammedan tells me that, unless I believe in the Arabian prophet, I shall go to hell; and the Mormons tell me that, unless I believe in Brigham Young, I shall go to hell. In fact, it matters not which way I go, I shall be condemned to at least a dozen hells, by as many different sects, disappointed of the little aid and comfort which they might have derived from my consenting to wear the yoke of their several creeds. If the rejection of any doctrine be a proper cause for punishment, then belief must be a matter of merit and demerit; then belief must be subject to the government of the will; then men should desire to believe *that* doctrine to be true which is the road to heaven, and not that which has the most evidence to support it, for in the latter case they would read the Bible and the Age of Reason in an impartial state of mind, with a disposition to give them "mere indifferent fair play"—a disposition highly reprobated by the Church. How a man can learn that a doctrine is the road to heaven, except because it is true; how he is to find out that it is true, except by examining the evidence on both sides, with a mind as nearly impartial as possible; and how he can assert that

Digitized by Google

he can control his belief by his will, are matters incomprehensible to me. The Christians tell me that I ought to desire to believe their dogmas, and that, if I should desire to believe, I could believe. That is to say, after I have made a full and, as I think, an impartial examination of their evidences and arguments, and after having arrived at the conclusion that their creed is false and prejudicial to the interests of humanity, it is still my duty to desire to believe it. Perhaps other men can govern their belief by their will, but I can not. The offer of ten millions of dollars cash reward for my belief, during the space of but five minutes, that the sky is green, would make me wish to have such a belief; but the wish would be a vain one. No man, by the conscious influence of his will alone, can govern his belief—no man ever did—no man ever can—and without the possibility of such government, there can, according to human ideas of justice, be no merit or demerit in belief.

The constitution of the human mind requires a man to have prejudices in favor of the form of faith which prevails among all those whom he knows, loves, and respects. The Brahmin youth is prejudiced in favor of Brahminism; the Mohammedan youth in favor of Islamism; the Boodhist youth in favor of Boodhism; the Mormon youth in favor of Mormonism; and the Christian youth in favor of Christianity. There is no more merit in one prejudice than in another; and yet, just that prejudice determines the creed of three-fourths of the human race. The different creeds have their source in humanity itself; "they are only so many steps in the development of mankind."

"The two and seventy sects, on earth confessed,
Collective dwell in every human breast."*

* ALGER.—Oriental Poetry.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ABSOLUTE TRUTH UNATTAINABLE BY MAN.

"All that we know is that we know nothing."—SOCRATES.

§ 197. The purpose of this book is to seek truth, and the question now arises: "What is truth?" The lexicographers say, it is "conformity to fact." But that definition gives no light, for the question immediately follows: "What is fact?" There is a class of philosophers who say that man can not prove any thing to be *absolutely* true. We shall examine this proposition, and if we find it to be correct, we shall have to conclude, that Christianity is built on a sandy foundation. We learn, what is ordinarily called "truth," or "the reality of things," by sensation and reason,—and by those only. It was at one time asserted that men have "innate" ideas—thoughts born with them; but this theory is now exploded, and metaphysicians agree upon the two faculties just mentioned as the sources of all our knowledge. Some metaphysicians say that there are two kinds of reason,—the "practical," and the "pure;" but I shall use the word "reason" in its common and plain meaning, as understood by every man. Consciousness, which informs us of many facts, is a kind of sensation—that kind which perceives our own thoughts and impressions.

§ 198. First then we shall consider the senses as means of learning the truth. It is a well understood principle among natural as well as speculative philosophers that the impressions upon the senses are sometimes not trustworthy; their reports can not be relied upon as infallible. Sound, light, color, heat, and odor are conceived by the barbarian as "things," material in their nature; but scientific investigation has demonstrated that they are merely impressions upon the senses caused by different vibrations of the gaseous, or æthereal mediums, which surround the body. Bass sounds are caused by slow vibrations of the air, striking upon the tympanum of the ear; shrill sounds, by rapid

Digitized by Google

vibrations. So the various ideas of colors are the impressions on the retina, caused by the different kinds of oscillations imparted to the light-medium, by the object which we look at. Reason discovers the errors of the senses in these cases. In fact, the senses may be said to teach nothing clearly. If it were possible that a man should grow to mature years without the use of any of his senses, and could then be gifted with the use of all of them at once, he would at first derive little knowledge from them. Things seen would appear upside down, and as though immediately against his eyes ; and it would require a long course of teaching, and reasoning, before he could know what he saw. His sense of touch would not teach him at first where the sensation was received ; he would have to learn by experience to connect the reports of the various nerves with the different parts of the body. If hurt, he would feel the pain, but could not tell whence it came. And thus it would be more or less with all the senses : the teachings all have no clearness, until the mind has learned to distinguish the force and meaning of the different impressions after much counter observation, remembering, and comparing. And when once a certain sensation has become connected with a certain idea, it is almost impossible to separate them. Thus men whose legs have been cut off while they were under the influence of chloroform, on returning to consciousness, but before learning of the amputation, have complained of pain or itching in different toes of the severed foot, and have insisted that they were not in error as to the locality of the pain. When told that the leg was cut off, they have obstinately refused to believe it, and could only be convinced by seeing or feeling with the hand. The nerves which led to the amputated parts were irritated, and the sensation was referred by the brain at once to the place where the nerve came to the surface. So when a man's nose is mended with skin from his forehead, any sensation in the new flesh is at first referred to the place with which the sensations of its nerves were from childhood associated. The feelings of touch and pain are perceived as though the different parts of the body were exclusively conscious of those sensations which originate in them severally. Thus, if the finger be

Digitized by Google

pinched, the pain is felt there, and not in the head, or any other part of the body; but the sensation is nevertheless in the brain. When the pain is perceived, the memory immediately discovers the place, by former experience, and the feeling is referred by the mind to that place alone. But if the nerve be cut which connects the finger with the brain, then the finger can be carved or bruised in any imaginable manner, and the man has no sensation in it, or from it.

§ 198. All the senses are subject to "illusions" and "hallucinations." It is a notorious fact that many very learned, upright, and strong-minded men suppose that they see, hear, and feel spirits. Socrates frequently heard a "divine voice" as he called it, warning him not to act, as he thought of acting; and he heard this voice often from childhood until the time of his death; and he always obeyed it. Joan of Arc frequently saw and conversed with angels, from the time she was thirteen until she was eighteen years of age, when she was executed. Tasso saw and conversed with a spirit in the presence of his friend, Manso. Luther saw the devil, and threw his inkstand at him. Swedenborg saw and conversed with spirits. Brutus saw a phantom which told him, it was his evil spirit, and would meet him at Philippi. There are not less than a thousand persons in the United States now, who say that they frequently see or hear, or both see and hear, the spirits of deceased human beings, and these persons—like those specially named above—sincerely believe in the positive reality of these ghosts, and are beyond the suspicion of any kind of dishonesty. This perception of ghosts is called a "hallucination" by the physiologists, and a special chapter is allotted to it in many of the medical text books on physiology and insanity, it being generally considered a species of cerebral disease.

§ 199. In dreams, too, the senses deceive us. We hear, see, feel, taste and touch, and within the space of a few minutes dream of living through long years. The dream-impression remaining on the mind, is often as strong as that made by the sensations in the waking state, and we can distinguish the recollection of the dream from the recollection of the reality only by seeing that the latter is

Digitized by Google

connected regularly with our memory of precedent and subsequent events, whereas the dream is cut off at both ends.

§ 200. We learn then by the comparison and criticism of our various sensations that the senses often deceive us, and that we must scrutinize their impressions closely with reason, before receiving them as trustworthy. The consideration of the nature of our perceptions, will also show us, that the testimony of the senses alone will not suffice to prove anything to be absolutely true. I perceive before me a small block of marble; it is characterized by a certain length, breadth, thickness, color, weight, solidity, chemical nature of its elements, and mechanical arrangement of its particles. I perceive these characteristics, and, indeed, I do not perceive anything else. I perceive the properties of the matter, not the matter itself. But my idea of these properties is merely relative; I can conceive the property of one object only by comparing it with another. There is no absolute length; I arrive at the idea only by comparing things which differ in length. So too with color; if I could perceive but one color, there would be no color for me; it would be mere light and shade. The blind have no conception of color, and perhaps the nearest approach to such a conception was on the part of the blind man, who, when asked to give a description of scarlet, said, it was like the sound of a trumpet: and the same may be said of all the properties of bodies. Something depends, too, on the condition of the organs of sensation: in certain diseases all objects appear to the eye as if tinged with different colors, according to the nature of the malady. Things which appear soft to the tough hands of a man, are hard to the tender fingers of infants, etc. We cannot take cognizance of the ultimate nature of matter, "nor can* data be furnished by observation or experiment, on which to found an investigation of it." "Of things,† absolutely, or in themselves, we know nothing, or know them only as incognizable; and we become aware of their incomprehensible existence only, as this is indirectly revealed to us through certain qualities related to our faculties of knowl-

* Brande.
† Sir Wm. Hamilton.

edge. All that we know is, therefore, phenomenal, phenomenal of the unknown." We cannot perceive matter itself, and we cannot prove the absolute existence of those properties which we connect with the idea of matter.

§ 201. I say that I perceive not the matter, but only its properties; and I can perceive the properties only as in relation to other properties. But do I really perceive the properties? No; I perceive only my idea of the properties. My perception is conscious of a thought, and of nothing more; it is impossible from its nature that it should be conscious of any thing else. I think that I see the block of marble, and that thought is the only evidence which I can have that I do see it. I can not go beyond that thought to obtain evidence that the marble exists, and is such a thing as I conceive it to be. I can not discover any necessary reason why the thought should accurately represent the existence and nature of the marble. Man knows of his existence only by thinking, by an idea; he knows there is a sun only because he sees it, because he thinks he sees it. He can not get beyond the idea; perhaps the idea agrees to the actual fact; perhaps it does not; perhaps there is nothing but the idea. There is no positive evidence—not the remotest particle of evidence—that any thing exists independently of man's idea, or that, if there be any independent existence, it is as the idea represents it to be. "All the choir of heaven, and furniture of earth, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any subsistence without a mind," and subsists only while it conceives them. All things, as conceived by us, may be classed under two heads, the "Me," and the "Not-me." The Me is myself, the idea of my own thought; the Not-me is my idea of matter and of all things, except my thought. For all that we can know to the contrary by absolute proof, the Not-me exists only in the imagination of the Me. The latter, considered philosophically, is not only the cause, but also the essence of all existence, and of all reality.* If substance exists absolutely, then the Me is the only substance, and the Not-me is merely qualities of it. Every thing exists only in and for the Me. Take away the Me, and nothing is left. It makes the conditions of all knowledge,

* SCHELLING.—*Das Unbedingte.* §§ 10. 11. 12. 13.

describes the spheres of every thing conceivable, and, as the Absolute and All-including, governs our whole system of thought. All phenomena are merely conditions of the "Me." The universe lies inside of the thinker, not outside of him. In referring all impressions to a *subjective* source, and denying *objective* existence, the idealist returns to his original mode of thought. "If," says Morell, "we could, by any means, transport ourselves into the mind of an infant, before the perceptive consciousness is awakened, we should find it in a state of absolute isolation from every thing else in the world around it. Whatever objects may be presented to the eye, the ear, or the touch, they are treated simply as subjective feelings, without the mind possessing any consciousness of them as objects, at all. To it, the inward world is every thing, the outward world is nothing." Such is infant's mode of thought, to which modern philosophy endeavors to return, in so far as such a thing is possible. Nearly all the metaphysicians of the last hundred years were idealists, and such men as Diderot, D'Alembert, Mackintosh, Dugald Stewart, Brougham, and Carlyle, have approved Turgot's opinion that he, who has never rejected the absolute existence of matter, has no talent for metaphysical reasoning. The great opponent of this idealistic theory was Reid, and he substantially confessed that it was impregnable against every possible attack. His great argument was that the idealists did not believe their own doctrines, for they would not run themselves through with swords. But there is really no inconsistency between the practise and theory of the idealists; they always have acknowledged the relative existence of matter,—such a kind of existence as for all practical purposes is the same as if it were absolute. Man is the slave of his dream—of his idea. He is governed by certain laws which must not be violated. The sword is a mere idea, and yet, to run a sword-idea through a man-idea, is to violate a rule of the dreamer's existence, and a pain-idea, or a death-idea, is the consequence.

§ 202. Memory may be said to be the present consciousness of past events—the reviving of old sensations. This is a kind of knowledge which, like other kinds, has its defects. We imagine sometimes that real events occurred only in dream, and that events dreamed occurred in actual life, and

Digitized by Google

in such cases, there is no certain criterion of absolute knowledge. Shakespeare* represents a certain Christopher Sly, a drunken vagabond, who had lived in misery and dirt all his life, as having been taken up while intoxicated and asleep, and placed in bed in the palace of a lord. When he had grown sober and awakened, he found a multitude of servants waiting upon him, and the principal ones asked anxiously how he was; expressed great joy at his recovery, and wished to know his commands. He replied that he was quite well, he was Christopher Sly, he dwelt in such a place. They told him that he was the hereditary lord of that castle, but had been crazy since childhood, and had supposed himself to be a certain Christopher Sly, vagabondizing, drinking bad liquor, keeping low company, and lying in the gutters. Finally Christopher was persuaded that all his past life was a dream, and he began to act the lord. He soon got drunk, his fine clothes were taken off, his old rags put on, and he was again placed in the gutter. When he came to himself, it was some time before he could get back to the idea that he was only Christopher Sly, and then he came to the conclusion that his lordship was only a dream. In this story Shakespeare has painted the nature of human knowledge truly. No man has any more secure knowledge of the past than Christopher Sly had: and *he* acted in accordance with the principles which ought to govern a philosophic mind. There is no man who, by skillful management, might not be brought to believe all his past life to be only a dream, an unreality,—the wild imaginings of insanity.

§ 203. We may now pretty safely say that the testimony of the senses can not suffice to prove any proposition to be *absolutely* true: and therefore we turn to reason and ask what she can do. She tells us at once that she is fallible: and in such case, we cannot rely upon her conclusions as infallibly or absolutely true. Truth is said, by metaphysicians, to be "necessary" or "contingent:" arguments are "demonstrative" or "probable." The only truth which is "necessary" and the only arguments which are "demonstrative" are found in mathematics, or what are called the "*exact* sciences." Men may and will differ in their opinions about moral, political and religious philosophy and about

*Prologue to 'Taming the Shrew.'

Digitized by Google

natural science: but all men admit the truth of the proposition that two and two make four: and so of other mathematical propositions generally. But if we examine the nature of these propositions we shall find that they are "necessary" truths, and their "arguments" are "demonstrative" and their science is "exact" because the truth is implied in the definition of the original terms. No man will deny that two and two make four, simply because the word "four" means something made of two and two. The absolute impossibility of escaping from a definition was well discovered by a little boy in a sunday school, whose class was told by the teacher that God could do anything. The scholar said he knew something that God could not do. After a proper expression of horror at the supposed blasphemy, the teacher demanded what it was that God could not do. The juvenile skeptic replied, "He can't make a four-year-old colt in a minute": and after some study the teacher concluded that the boy was right; even Omnipotence must fail in attempting such a task.

§ 204. Perhaps in no point is the inability of the mind to discover absolute truth shown more strikingly than in the fact that we cannot discover any *necessary* connection between cause and effect. We speak of a necessary effect, but the necessity is a mere presumption. We know that certain phenomena are always followed by certain other phenomena, and we call the former cause and the latter effect: and because the connection is invariable we call it necessary. We learn the connection by experience: we never could learn it by abstract reasoning. If some new natural object were discovered to-morrow, we could not know what effect it would produce under certain imaginable circumstances except by experiment, or guessing from the result of previous experience with other substances to which the new object appeared to bear a resemblance. We may discover a vast number of intermediate causes intervening between remote causes and effects, but the necessity of the connection is none the more clear. A blow on the hand gives pain, because the flesh is bruised; because the bruise prevents the healthy circulation of blood; because without healthy circulation of the blood, the nerves are not supplied properly with the material requisite for their nor-

Digitized by Google

mal action, and because when they have not such material they complain of pain. But we have come no nearer to the discovery of the *necessary* connection after tracing all these intermediate steps than we were before. The physiologist will argue to you that the blow *must* give pain, because—and here he traces all the intermediate causes, and shows that these causes *always* have produced these effects, heretofore and *therefore* must always do so hereafter. "Philosophy" says Solly "is the discovery of the universality of a fact." We say that wherever one phenomenon is invariably followed by another, the former is the cause and the latter the effect. And yet we do not say that day is the cause of night or night of day. But in these cases we discover intermediate sequences which connect day and night with the changing positions of the sun, and not with each other in the relation called cause and effect.

§ 205. Reason cannot alone prove anything to be absolutely true, because in its very nature it can only draw conclusions from admitted premises. All argumentation, which is the only and exclusive domain of reason, may be reduced to syllogisms. Every syllogism is necessarily composed of three parts, a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Here is an example:

Major Premise.—All men are mortal.

Minor Premise.—James is a man.

Conclusion.—James is mortal.

Without a major and a minor premise, expressed or understood, there can be no syllogistic conclusion—no sound argument. The truth of the two premises is always assumed in any single syllogism, but they may be proved in other syllogisms. The major premise in the above syllogism may be proved as follows:

1. All animals are mortal.
2. All men are animals.
3. All men are mortal.

By rising in that manner from one syllogism to another, we at last arrive at the great original premise, on which all knowledge is based—"I exist." As this is the last of all premises, so it cannot be proved by reason. We must accept it for what it is worth in the testimony of

Digitized by Google

consciousness. "The absolute existence of the 'Me,'" says Schelling,* "lies beyond the possibility of objective proof ***. My selfhood implies an existence which precedes all thinking and representation. Its existence consists in its conception of itself, and it is conceived because it exists, because it exists and is conceived only so far as it conceives itself." "Except† some first principles be taken for granted, there can be neither reason, nor reasoning. It is impossible that every truth should admit of proof, otherwise proof would extend ad infinitum. If ever men attempt to prove a first principle, it is because they are ignorant of the nature of proof." Abercombie, one of the most acute of the late metaphysicians, whose associations and character were not favorable to idealistic prejudices, says: "Many ingenious but fallacious arguments were at one time wasted in attempting to establish by processes of reasoning" the propositions "that we exist, that external things are as they appear, that our memory must tell truth, and that every event must have a cause"; and in making that admission, he speaks the general opinion of the speculative philosophers of the age. "Is is supposed‡ by many, that by means of reasoning we can arrive at conceptions, of which we have no previous idea, whatever. This supposition, however, it is almost needless to say, will not bear examination. Whether our reasoning be inductive or deductive, the conclusion of the whole is always virtually involved in the premises. To reason at all, we must have certain data, and must also employ distinct and intelligible terms; but it is evident these data and these terms always imply an amount of experience in the question, without which all our reasoning would be empty, and beyond which our conclusion can never go. Logical reasoning alters the *relations* of our ideas—it never transcends them. It makes our knowledge more distinct: it does not expand the horizon of our mental vision." Between the physiologists, who prove that mind cannot exist, except as dependent upon matter, and the psychologists, who prove that the existence of matter cannot be demonstrated, absolute truth seems to fare badly.

* *Das Unbedingte* § 3.
† ARISTOTLE. Translated in Abercombie on the Intellectual Powers.
‡ MORELL. Philosophy of Religion.

Digitized by Google

It may be asked, "If there be no truth, why this book?" But I have not said there is no truth; I have merely denied the possibility of attaining *absolute* truth; I recognize the existence and high importance of relative truth. I admit, that men must live as if there were an absolute, outward, material world; I do not wish a body to kick me, because I assert that he cannot prove himself to be an actual body, independently of my thought. I merely wish to question his absolute being, when he comes to dogmatize at me.

§ 206. But what is truth? The Boodhist, the Mohammedan, the Brahmin, the Christian, and the Mormon, each asserts that his faith is true, and each is ready to prove the sincerity of his assertion by martyrdom, if necessary. Is there no truth? Or may a dozen propositions, inconsistent with each other, all be true? How shall I know whether my neighbor is right or myself, when we come to different conclusions, reasoning from the same premises? Is there no criterion of truth, to which all mankind can resort for the purpose of harmonizing their opinions, as weights and measures are regulated according to standards fixed by government? No! there is no such criterion. The history of Philosophy may be sought through in vain for any touchstone by which truth is to be known. Christian theologians once pretended that they had found the standard in the Bible, but the pretension is now abandoned. Truth is not "conformity to fact," but it is "the conformity of a proposition, with the constitution of the human mind." What that constitution is, every one must discover for himself, in his own soul; and since minds are not all alike, so truth is not the same for all men. Beauty and morality are akin to truth, in so far as they are the conformity of moral principles, or of objects perceived by the senses, to the constitution of the mind; and in regard to them, too, there are diversities of opinions among men equally wise and benevolent. Much that is true for me, is false for my neighbor. Scarcely any proposition can be imagined more evidently true to a savage, than that the sun revolves round the earth, or moves through the sky from East to West every day; and it is just as evidently false to me. Why do we differ? Because our states of mental enlightenment

Digitized by Google

differ. Because I know more of the constitution of my mind, than he does of his. The investigation of truth is the examination of the laws of one's own mind. As Emerson says, the human soul is the text of all study. The books of the historians, poets and philosophers, are only the comments upon it. I read in them only, to find the meaning and capabilities of myself. When I read the history of the Athenian democracy, consider the progress of the American republic, study the details of Napoleon's campaigns, look at Carlyle's picture of the French revolution, or become absorbed in Faust or Jane Eyre, I am learning what there is in my own brain. All the great works of great men are to me as though done by myself, —unconsciously—in a state of mental exaltation; and I need to look over those works, to see whether I can not raise myself to the level of that exaltation, and preserve myself there. When I seek truth, I seek to know what is within me,—not what is without. When I am true to my convictions, when I speak and act according to my faith, I do my duty to my own soul,—not to some idol which exists outside and in despite of me.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXIX.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE.

"Adieu, oh Church! Thy road is that way, mine is this: in God's name, adieu!"—CARLYLE.

§ 207. We have heard the testimony against the Bible: let us look back, and try to sum up the facts proved.

The God of the Christians is a material being, with a body bearing a resemblance more or less close to that of men and monkeys. He walks, talks, eats, works, and rests. He has a mind similar to that of man. He is gratified by praise, and is indignant at neglect. He selects certain men to be his favorites, and he is the enemy of their enemies. In ancient times he was in habit of frequently visiting earth: he took part in human battles; he murdered tens and hundreds of thousands at a blast. However, he is not without pity, if we may believe the Scriptures which represent himself as frequently repenting for the evil which he proposed to do, and had done to his people.

Jesus, the Savior, and part of Jehovah, had no thought of establishing Christianity as now taught. He, perhaps, intended to organize a revolt of the Jews, and for this purpose claimed to be the Messiah of Jewish prophecy. Probably he imagined that under the pretext of being a teacher of religion, he could more conveniently organize his party than by other means, and therefore began in that way. He obeyed the Mosaic law, as did all his apostles and disciples; and so far as his religious teaching was concerned, it was an insignificant variation from the Pharisaical doctrines, and would scarcely have served as the foundation of a sect. Ten years after the death of Jesus, his disciples and apostles in Jerusalem were astonished at the proposition that they should keep fellowship with a man, who had not been circumcised, and who did not observe the ceremonial law of the nation. They had never heard such a doctrine from him. If he commanded them to preach his doctrines to

Digitized by Google

others than the Jews, it was with the clear condition, that all the Gentile converts should be circumcised, and should observe the Mosaic ritual. Jesus was not an admirable character. He acted in a cowardly manner, when the Romans were about to arrest him: and he was a person, so little known, that the officers had to bribe one of his own party, not only to point out his place of concealment, but to designate the person. When under arrest, he was deserted by his friends, who, according to the Bible, believed him to be God himself. He thought that many diseases are caused by the entrance of devils into the body: he imagined that a juggling trick should suffice to prove the truth of all that the juggler may assert. He cursed a tree, because it did not bear fruit out of season: and he threatened the most terrible punishments to people who would not believe his claims to a divine mission.

Paul first taught the doctrines which are now received as the fundamental dogmas of Christianity. He claimed to have a commission from the Jewish Jehovah, authorizing him to revoke the doctrine that the Jews were especial Divine favorites, and to abrogate the laws enforcing the observance of circumcision, worship by sacrifice, the Passover, and the Mosaic Sabbath. Paul got into the church by queer means. He was not converted by any of the apostles, but pretended to have received a revelation, for his own especial benefit, in the form of a vision. He told three or four contradictory stories about this vision. He said that the men who were with him saw a great light, and he said they did not. He said they heard a voice, and he said they did not. He said they fell to the ground, and he said they did not. When he went to Jerusalem, and told this story, the disciples would not believe him; they would have nothing to do with him. They never recognized him as a Christian; the legitimate Apostles never recognized him as one of their body. When he went to Jerusalem, the Christian Jews raised a mob, and to escape their vengeance, he went into the Temple, under the advice of the Apostle James, and took a solemn and false oath, that he did not teach his converts to neglect the ritual of Moses.

David is represented in the Bible as being the greatest favorite whom Jehovah ever had on earth. He

Digitized by Google

was a man "after God's own heart." He was an inspired prophet. He was chosen as the head of the dynasty which should rule forever over the temporal interests of God's chosen people, and as the progenitor of the Divine man who should bring salvation to all mankind. And yet David commenced his public life as the leader of a filibustering gang of vagabonds, bankrupts and outcasts. He murdered the people and plundered the property of the king who gave him shelter. He started out to slay a man who had properly refused to submit to his extortionate demands. He obtained the throne of Israel by bribes. He murdered the sons and grandsons of the king whose throne he had usurped. He sent a traitor to betray his own son. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, murdered her husband, and then married her. When he had become powerful, and was firmly fixed on his throne, he discarded his wife, who when a king's daughter, had loved him, then a poor adventurer, and who had saved his life from the murderous designs of her father; and his only reason for this divorce was that she laughed at him when he danced naked in the streets. He massacred every male in Edom, slaughtered two-thirds of the conquered Moabites, and when he had taken Rabbah, he cut the men with saws, beat them with hammers, and roasted them on brick-kilns. And finally he died, ordering his son to murder the men whom he disliked, but whose lives he had sworn not to take.

The Jews, though Jehovah's chosen people,—though he manifested himself by miracles to them frequently,—though he gave them a constant supply of great prophets, who possessed supernatural power, and held the positions of political rulers, were yet in constant rebellion against him. For a thousand years after Moses, they were almost incessantly engaged in worshipping idols, offering incense to Baal, burning their children as sacrifices, and observing all the obscene rites of worship which prevailed among the most licentious of the Heathen. Instead of being models of piety and morality, as might be imagined, from their choice as divine favorites, they were among the basest and vilest of nations.

The Bible teaches the superstitious notions of the existence of a material hell, a personal, material devil, angels, witches, and sorcerers. It declares that the universe was

Digitized by Google

once governed, not by natural laws, but by the immediately-acting will of Jehovah. Before the time of Jesus, he ruled creation on a system entirely different from that which prevails now. He appeared in person to men, spoke with them, ate with them, gave them laws, made coats and houses for them, sent angels to them, revealed himself to them in visions, commissioned prophets to speak for him, expressed his will in lots, was pleased with sacrifices, authorized his favorites to perform miracles, permitted ghosts to become visible to human eyes, and to speak audibly to human ears, and he rewarded virtue, and punished vice, like a human judge, while the workers of good and evil were still living, and where the example might be of value to deter others from sin, and encourage them to live righteously. We all know that the universe is governed on these principles no longer: and if, indeed, Jehovah was the governor in ancient times, and governed, as reported in the Bible, might we not reasonably suspect that he is dead? Is it not quite as likely that he should have died, as that his whole character and mode of life should have changed?

The Bible speaks falsely, when it asserts that the universe is only six thousand years old; that the earth required five days for the making, and all the rest of the universe but one; that light was made before the planets; that birds were made before reptiles; that all land-animals now existing, are the descendants of pairs preserved in an ark from a universal deluge: that there was a universal deluge: that each distinct species of animal was created by a distinct act of Jehovah: that all species of animals ate only vegetable food before the flood: that heaven is a solid arch, with a stock of water above it: and that the varieties of language are owing to a miraculous confusion of tongues, inflicted by Jehovah as a punishment on the impious people of Babel.

The chronology of the Old Testament, previous to the time of David, is entirely lacking in those characteristics, which are considered necessary to trustworthiness in other ancient histories; and, besides, is contradicted by the Bible itself, by the facts of natural history, and by the monuments of Egypt. The reported details of the emigration of the Jews from Egypt are evidently fictitious. The history of

Digitized by Google

Jesus himself is, to a considerable extent, mythic and undeserving of credit.

The Bible is full of contradictory statements. The *Kings* and *Chronicles* contradict each other in every chapter. The various genealogies of Jesus are full of discrepancies, as are also the various accounts of his resurrection.

The Christians represent Jehovah as a perfect being, and yet, their Scriptures assert, that, at different times, he taught men that there is a future life, and that there is not: that he rewards and punishes virtue and vice in this life to the full extent that is necessary for the vindication of his justice, and that he does not; that the only punishment of Adam was inflicted on earth, and that its chief punishment shall be inflicted after leaving the earth: that God is a pure unit, and that he is a three-fold unit: and that the Mosaic law should remain in force forever, and that it should not.

The morality of Moses and Jesus is defective. They legalize slavery and polygamy. The Old Testament justifies concubinage, treachery, revenge, and assassination, and oppression towards the Gentiles. The New Testament declares that all forms of government, all institutions of tyranny are established by God, and cannot be resisted, or overturned without incurring his anger. Jesus teaches that poverty and celibacy are virtues, and gives a broad hint that men particularly desirous of getting to heaven, should emasculate themselves. He degrades woman, and does not recognize the rights of man.

None of the prominent Mosaic or Christian doctrines were original with the teachers, who are represented in the Bible as having first taught them by divine authority. All the important doctrines of Moses—those of monotheism, a hereditary and dominant priesthood, the use of sacred books, of a temple for divine worship, circumcision, the observance of one day in seven as sacred, the partiality of the Deity for one nation, and divine worship by sacrifice, incense and numerous and complicated ceremonies—all were copied from the Egyptians. The important doctrines of the New Testament—those of the trinity, the incarnation, original sin, redemption by the sacrifice of a god, the immortality of the soul, rewards and punishments in a fu-

Digitized by Google

ture life, for deeds done in this, the necessity of belief to salvation, the uselessness of ceremonial worship, the merit of poverty, self-denial, humility and submission to wrong, and even many of the details of the peculiar history of the conception, birth and early history of Jesus—all these are copied directly or indirectly from the Boodhists and Platonists, or from other heathen sects, or philosophical schools of Europe and Asia.

The doctrines of Judaism and Christianity appear to have been developed by the same gradual growth as has marked the history of all other systems of human opinion. In early times, God communicated directly with men, and rewarded and punished them immediately for their good and evil deeds. Abraham worshipped a family-god; Moses a national god; the Israelites, after the Babylonian captivity, worshipped one only omnipotent God: and Paul worshipped a God who looks with equal favor on all men. As the doctrine of immediate divine government declined among the Pagans, so did it among the Jews. Jehovah appeared in his visible shape to Adam, Noah, and Abraham: he spoke to Moses: but in later times he did not condescend to communicate with men otherwise than by angels, and finally only by visions.

The Biblical reports of miracles bear the marks of the superstition, credulity, and dishonesty of the writers. The reports are conflicting: but if they agreed, they would not suffice to prove their own truth: and proof that Jesus had raised a dead man to life, would not prove him to have possessed supernatural power; nor would the possession of supernatural power have proved him to be possessed of supernatural truth; nor if possessed of supernatural truth, could he be justified in seeking to convert men by miracles; which, used as a means for mastering men's belief, insult and degrade reason.

There is not in the whole Old Testament one prediction clearly foretelling the coming or character of Jesus; nor is there one prophecy which exhibits any wonderful foreknowledge on the part of its author. The Evangelists misunderstood the Old Testament; and supposed many passages to be prophetic, which have evidently no other meaning than the plain historical one. The most important and

Digitized by Google

clearest predictions of the Bible—those of the coming of Christ in the first century,. of a royal Messiah who should reëstablish the Jewish nationality, and of the perpetuity of the Mosaic law, the kingdom of Israel, and the dynasty of David—have not been, and never can be fulfilled. The predictions of the destruction of Tyre, Babylon, Damascus, Jerusalem, Mount Seir and Egypt, have none of them been fulfilled.

The laws, the history, the poetry, and the proverbs possess no such great literary excellence as we might anticipate from a book inspired by Jehovah; but their defects are so great that no author of reputation in the present age could produce a book, containing so many absurdities and violations of the laws of literary taste.

The books of the Bible are not genuine. *Genesis* was not written by any one man, but was patched together from two old documents, the fragments of which are plainly discoverable, and have been recognized by nearly all the great Biblical critics of the present time. Thus, the story of Adam's Fall, which is the foundation of Christ's mission, is reduced to a fable. As the first and most important book of the Old Testament is a forgery, so also is the first and most important book of the New. The only knowledge of the authorship of *Matthew* is that tradition says the Apostle Matthew wrote a gospel in Hebrew. The same tradition says that he wrote for the Jewish Christians; and that the descendants of those Jewish Christians for whom he wrote preserved a book purporting to be his gospel but differing much from our present Gospel of *Matthew:* whence, more especially since the original of our *Matthew* is in Greek and not in Hebrew, we must conclude that our book is not the genuine work of that apostle. The Gospels of *Mark* and *Luke* were either copied from *Matthew*, or else all three copied from some more ancient manuscript.

We know that no part of the Bible has come down to us uncorrupted. One hundred and fifty thousand variations occur in the text of the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, from which our present text has been ta Most of the Christian commentators admit that ther several hundred forged and spurious passages in the as we now have it, and we learn from the Scriptures t

Digitized by Google

selves, that twenty books, mentioned in them as inspired, have been lost.

Man is an animal; he has similar organs and faculties with other animals. All his faculties, so far as known, are functions of material organs. His mind, judging from all the facts and analogies of Physiology known to us, is the function of his brain. If the brain be injured or diseased, the mind is injured; the strength of the mind depends on the size of the brain; the brain must have rest after the mind has been exerted; the mind loses its vigor when old age attacks the brain; the exercise of the mind is always accompanied by a proportionate wearing away of the substance of the brain; over-exertion of the mind causes pain in the brain; when the mind is excited, the brain demands an unusually large supply of blood; intelligence and memory have their seats in the cerebrum; the power of combining the muscles in harmonious action resides in the cerebellum; and consciousness is a function of the sensory ganglia. All these facts go to show that the mind is the mere function of the brain, as bile-secretion is the function of the liver; and if such be the case, we must conclude, unless there be some evidence to the contrary, and there is none yet, that the mind dies with the brain.

The belief in an anthropomorphic Creator and Governor of the universe is founded on assumptions. The anthropomorphists assume that because the design in the mechanism of a watch proves that it was made by an intelligent person, therefore, the apparently more profound design in nature proves that the universe was created by a personal intelligence. They assume that Gods must use means to attain ends; for that is implied in design. They assume that the forces inherent in matter will not suffice to account for the phenomena of nature; whereas science declares that she has sought through the universe without finding any supernatural being or any trace of one. They assume that the existence of an anthropomorphic Governor is consistent with the admitted existence of omnipotent and eternal law. They assume that the forces existing in matter are inferior in power to animal life and consciousness, and could not have produced them. They assume that after they have proved the existence of their God, they may

Digitized by Google

reasonably stop and say he has no parents or kin, never was created, but existed of himself from all eternity. They assume that this God may be at once personal and infinite. They assume that he can live without body, think without brain, see without eyes, and hear without ears.

The Bible teaches that a perfect personal Creator and Governor of the Universe will reward belief in Christianity with infinite pleasure, and punish disbelief in it with infinite sufferings in a future life. But we have seen that men are the slaves of motives; that motives have their origin in personal character and external circumstances; that both these are beyond the control of the individual; and therefore his conduct could not be matter of merit or demerit, in so far as his Creator might be concerned. Every natural phenomenon is the effect of a preëxisting and determining cause: and human actions, being natural phenomena, are not mere arbitrary and disconnected events, but are portions of the endless chain of causes and effects: and are therefore necessary and unavoidable. Besides belief is not a matter of volition: and if it were, the will should not be used, because reason alone is the proper judge of truth and should be left free to form whatever conclusion may be supported by the strongest evidence. The absurdity of the doctrine, that rejection of Christianity will be punished by infinite pains in hell, appears still more evident when we remember that, according to the Christian doctrine, miracles and revelations have ceased: and therefore the men of this age are deprived of the evidence upon which alone Jesus and the Apostles relied for the proof of the truth of their doctrines. Paul lived in the time of Jesus and the Apostles, had an opportunity of hearing their preaching and seeing their miracles and yet did not believe until Jesus gave him a special revelation. Thomas refused to believe until he had thrust his finger into the wounded side of the crucified God: and yet I am threatened with eternal hell for doubting when I have not a tenth part of the evidence, in the presence of which Paul was an open scoffer, and Thomas a skeptic of the resurrection of Jesus.

We have closed our investigation by a consideration of the nature of truth. We have seen that it is not a thing existing independently of man, but that it depends upon

Digitized by Google

him. Truth for me is the conformity of a proposition with the laws of my mind: and thus the alleged truths of the existence and nature of God, the divine origin of Christianity, and a future state with rewards and punishments are not absolutely true, but merely relative. I have to make them from within, not to learn them from without, if I am to find them true.

The rejection * of *historical* Christianity, as it is called, —the denial of the truth of the history of Jesus in the New Testament and of the written testimony brought forward to corroborate it—must in reason be accompanied by the rejection of *sentimental* Christianity. The testimony for both rests only on probabilities. We want certainty. We know of no absolute certainty—surely of none beyond the limit of momentary consciousness—a certainty that vanishes the instant it exists, and is lost in the regions of metaphysical doubt. Beyond this limit, absolute certainty, so far as human reason may judge, cannot be the privilege of any finite being.

True religion is a universal want. It is required for the development of man's moral nature. It is connected not with any particular faculty, or faculties, but with his whole intellectual being. This true religion, we are told, can be found only in Christianity: but this rests on something extrinsic to our nature, on testimony. Not only does this testimony admit of doubt, but it requires investigation. The capacity and means for a proper investigation are far from being common to all: and many, or rather a large majority, must therefore receive Christianity, if they receive it all, without any satisfactory evidence of its truth—as a matter taken upon trust—in blind reliance upon the opinion of others—in short, as a matter of superstition. The history of this alleged miraculous revelation is contained in certain books. In them are contained the doctrines supposed to be revealed. But a question immediately arises respecting the genuineness of these books. It cannot be certainly proved: for certainty is inconsistent with the nature of the only evidence that can be produced. This evidence is moreover such as requires much learning and study to enable any one

* This and the two succeeding paragraphs are altered from NORTON on the Latest Form of Infidelity.

Digitized by Google

by himself, to estimate its force. And supposing the genuineness of the books to be rendered probable, they are in ancient languages, understood by a few: and even when the language is mastered, still much varied knowledge is necessary to give them a probable explanation. By the generality, therefore, the historical fact of a revelation, the genuineness of its supposed records, and the purport of its supposed doctrines must all be received upon trust: and the few who have the capacity and means of investigation, can at best attain to nothing more than probable, not certain conclusions: whereas religion, to be universal, should have an assured foundation in the very nature of man. It can rest upon nothing extrinsic to it.

Besides, Christianity depends upon the belief in a personal divinity who immediately governs the universe, and in the immortality of the soul. Now, the evidence of these dogmas is not intuitive, and whatever ground for the belief of them may be afforded by the phenomena of nature, or the ordinary course of events, it is certain that the generality of men have never been able by their reason to obtain assurance concerning them, and many are not able to conceive of them as understood by us. A peculiar grade of civilization is required for their comprehension, another grade for belief in them: and a still higher grade requires their inevitable rejection. Christianity thus appears to us to be on a par with all the systems of earth-born superstition. Its substance and its evidence must be sought in history, and tradition, and fortuitous circumstance: it has no necessary connection with the inborn impulses, which lead us to love truth, and beauty, and justice, and to rejoice in their contemplation: it has not its origin within us, and when presented from without, it does not force itself with an instantaneous and irresistible conviction upon the mind, but appears connected with myriads of wrongs, abuses, errors, superstitions, and corruptions, and in no respect can claim any higher preëminence over other creeds than such as might naturally have been expected from a system formed under the influence of Grecian philosophy. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of those who have believed in Christianity, have believed as they took their medicine: with a blind faith in the professional skill of the physician. Wit

truth of his science, or the thoroughness of his knowledge, they knew nothing more than what they had heard from common report :—that he was a regular, orthodox doctor, had a collegiate education, and was reputed to be as good as the common run of doctors—perhaps the best in his vicinity. On this trust, they swallow pills and powders in blind confidence : and as a reward for such confidence in matters of "religion," as they call it,—of "superstition," as I call it,—they seriously inform me that they shall enjoy everlasting and infinite delight in a future life. I hope they may get it.

Such is the evidence on which the reader is asked to form his opinion, and determine whether he can be a Christian. Such is the evidence upon which most of the learned and independent thinkers of this age have rejected the Bible : and upon this evidence I am confident that all civilized men will, at no distant time, discard Christianity. This is, by no means, all the evidence, which might be produced against the Bible ; but it is all which appeared suitable in a book intended for the million. And this evidence, and every part of it, as I allege, and verily believe, is perfectly sound and trustworthy : it has not been, and it cannot be invalidated by any contrary testimony. It was not my place to argue the Christian side of the question, but it was my duty to grant all the Christians could prove ; and this I have done. I cannot call to mind a solitary point of importance, clearly established by the advocates of the Bible, which I have not admitted. And that the reader may do justice to the subject, and, if he desire, test my fairness, let him read Paley, Butler, and Jenyns, and as many Christian authors as he can, and see for himself whether their "evidences" are not mere chaff as compared with those here collected.

It is said that the emperor Julian, on his death-bed, seeing that the worship of Jesus had taken a firm hold upon the minds of the people, and vexed to think that with all his power and exertion, he had not been able to overthrow the new superstition, gave vent to his vexation by exclaiming "O, Galilean ! Thou hast conquered !" He was right. The Galilean had conquered Julian was completely defeated : all his labors had been in vain. For fourteen

Digitized by Google

centuries, the poor Galilean, of an "equivocal birth, wandering life, and ignominious death," has been the God of the Caucasian race. But his Godship is at an end. In behalf of the great men whose anti-Christian philosophy I have endeavored to collect and arrange methodically in this book, I venture to revoke the dying declaration of Julian, and to issue another suited to the position of Christianity in the present age. Not in the shame and mortification of irretrievable defeat, but in the exultation of the certain triumph of my cause, I declare "O, Galilean! Thou art conquered!"

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW REPLACE CHRISTIANITY?

> 'I have delivered you from a ferocious beast which was devouring you, and you ask me what I shall give you in its place!" VOLTAIRE.

§ 208. When an attack is made on the Bible, Christians and even "Infidels" are heard to demand "What do you propose to give us in its place?" Many of them care little about Christianity, but they wish to have some religious creed of recognized authority. They imagine that "religion" is necessary, at least among the "common people," as a support to morality; and they look upon an anthropomorphic God and a future state, with rewards and punishments, as indispensable parts of that "religion." In short, their great concern is to have something to assist detective police regulations, and they can conceive of nothing better for that purpose than the Christian superstition.

They imagine that morality cannot stand alone; that it must soon expire if not bolstered up by some fictions of heaven and hell. But it appeared to me that these persons mistake the nature of both morality and religion. There is no merit, no loveable quality in acts done merely for the sake of outside "pudding or praise" on earth or in heaven

Digitized by Google

When it is a settled matter that society is held together by such support only, then it were well that it should separate, and that the separate parts should go to the Christian devil. The support that morality wants is not religion, but religiousness—that devout, earnest, good-loving spirit which may be found, in high and admirable development, among Greeks and Romans, Brahmins, Boodhists, Parsees, Confucianists, Mohammedans, Atheists and Pantheists, as well as among Christians. If "Christianity" be necessary to morality, then man is indeed unfortunate; dependent for his virtue not on himself, not on the cultivation of his reason, not on his disposition to love and serve his fellow-men, but on his reception of a particular set of opinions, whether he comprehend them or not, whether they appear reasonable and probable to him or not, whether even they ever come to his ears or not. If Christianity be necessary to morality, then sad is the fate of those peoples which have known, which could know, and which do know so little of it. If belief in the Bible—even a blind and superstitious belief, as with most Christians it ever has been—were necessary to morality, then all the nations of Christendom should at once combine and exert all their powers to keep men from being immoral on earth and being damned in hell, by taking into their own hands the government of all countries, by teaching the all-saving creed to every human mind, by prohibiting, under the severest penalties, all expression of doubt or disbelief in it, and by suppressing all science and philosophy as dangerous in their tendencies and of no service for the great purpose of this life—the attainment of a "through-ticket" to the higher spheres of heaven.

Fortunately for humanity, morality depends for its existence and development upon no priest-built platform. The mind of man at birth contains within itself the germ of "love" which grows at even pace with the other intellectual faculties. "The rule* of life drawn from the practice and opinions of men corrects and improves itself, till at last, it determines entirely for virtue, and excludes all kinds of vice." "Sound reason† is a true law, conformable to nature, constant, unchangeable, eternal, and common to all men. It

* HARTLEY.
* CICERO, De Rep. Lib. 3.

Digitized by Google

commands them to do good, and forbids them to do evil. * * No one has the right to reject, to change, or to annul any portion of this law; no person can be freed from his obligation of observing it, either by the senate or by the people: its own internal light suffices to render it clear and intelligible; it is the same at Rome and at Athens, to-day and to-morrow;—alone, eternal, and invariable, it binds all nations and all times."

But we must take not what we desire to have, but what we can get; and no matter how much men may desire to have Christianity—no matter how valuable it might be in providing celestial or terrestial "pudding"—no matter how essential it might be for the conservation of society, and of the "fat" positions of certain members of society—it cannot be valuable for those purposes much longer. Its fate is fixed; its doom is written, in unmistakeable characters, upon the history of the civilized world during the last four hundred years. Only the greatest blindness can prevent a man from seeing the characters; only the greatest ignorance can prevent him from understanding them.

The war between humanity and Christianity began with the revival of learning, and the former has continued to gain strength in geometrical ratio, in every succeeding age. Every great advance of science or art has come to its aid. Those who never pothered themselves seriously with the question, whether the true moral revelation is to be found within or without, yet furnished arms to be used against the old superstition. The blindest bigots, who opposed freethought—the greatest tyrants, who oppressed its advocates, could not stem its progress for an instant: often they saw it only gain strength from their opposition. Immediately after Descartes promulgated his great principle, that nothing must be believed till it has been doubted, humanity appeared at last fully armed for the fight: she then encamped in the field, and she has never left it since. Galileo, intending to tell nothing more than what he saw through his telescope, exposed the Biblical falsehood of a solid firmament, of heavenly lights made merely to wait on the earth, and of a revolving sun, which might be stopped "upon Gibeon" whenever a Joshua might see fit to issue the order. A century later, the idea began to become

Digitized by Google

clear, that the universe is governed by universal, omnipotent, and invariable natural laws. Dr. Middleton, amidst cries of horror, from the orthodox churches, both Catholic and Protestant, exposed the frauds of the pretended miracles of the Catholic Church subsequently to the time of the Apostles. Hume wiped away all miracles. Berkeley denied the existence of matter : Hume threw his unanswerable skepticism over the connection between cause and effect, and over all kinds of certitude in knowledge. The popular belief in possession of diseased persons by devils, began to die away soon after the Reformation : and two centuries later, ghosts and witches were demolished. Voltaire and his associates sowed broadcast, among the people, the antichristian doctrines of political and religious freedom. Special providences were soon sent to follow miracles, in the storehouse of wornout absurdities. Astronomy, Geology, Physiology, Phrenology, Egyptology, Ethnology, and Comparative Philology followed each other, in swift succession, in pouring hot shot upon the crumbling, combustible, and disabled edifice of Christianity. Every year has seen some successful assault upon the Bible : now it is Bentham, now De Wette, now Strauss, now Hennell : and the Christians can do, and have done, nothing save hide behind tradition, and the inertia of popular opinion. They know that their creed must be demolished at no distant day ; but they hope by submissive silence to put off the flood until after their time.

The war is not yet ended ; humanity is flushed with past conquests and certain of speedy and final victory. She has learned that revolutions never go backward. She sees her forces strong on every side—Germany, France, England and America, each furnish millions of their best and bravest for the conflict, while the *Westminster Review*, the ablest periodical of the age, bears high aloft the glorious standard of freethought, and literature generally smiles approval. Christianity has lost most of her life-blood : her wounds are such that she never can recover ; the death-chill of indifferentism has already seized her extremities ; the convulsions of formalism and hypocrisy are torturing the little life that remains, and the premonitory symptoms of total dissolution are already visible. "In the revolutions of the human mind,"

Digitized by Google

posed almost every beneficial reform mentioned in history. And if the freethinkers succeed in extending the area ot popular education and of political and social freedom and equality, shall we fear that society and morality will be endangered? By no means. The old creed will soon be dead; the new religion must soon take its place; let us trust that humanity has within itself the germ of development to a higher form than it has yet reached; let us believe that when we seek to do right we are right; and let us hope that such doing will be for the best—not only for ourselves individually but for all mankind.

"Let * not then the mind, which is compelled to renounce its belief in miraculous revelations, deem itself bound to throw aside at the same time all its more cherished associations. Its generous emotions and high contemplations may still find an occasion for exercise in the review of the interesting incidents which have forever consecrated the plains of Palestine; but it may also find pleasure in the thought that for this exercise, no single spot of earth and no one page of its history, furnishes the exclusive theme. Whatever dimness may gather from the lapse of time and the obscurity of tradition about the events of a distant age, these capabilities of the mind itself remains, and always will remain, in full freshness and beauty. Other Jerusalems will excite the glow of patriotism, other Bethanies exhibit the affections of home, and other minds of benevolence and energy seek to hasten the approach of the kingdom of man's perfection. Nor can scriptures ever be wanting—the scriptures of the physical and moral world—the book of the universe. Here the page is open and the language intelligible to all men; no transcribers have been able to interpolate or erase its texts; it stands before us in the same genuineness as when first written; the simplest understanding can enter with delight into criticism upon it; the volume does not close, leaving us to thirst for more, but another and another epistle still meets the inquisitive eye, each signed with the author's own hand, and bearing undoubted characters of divine inspiration."

* HENNELL. Origin of Christianity.

Digitized by Google

says Robert Hall, "exploded *opinions* are often revived; but an exploded superstition never recovers its credit. The pretension to [infallible] divine revelation is so august and commanding, that when its falsehood is once discerned, it is covered with all the ignominy of detected imposture; it falls from such a height that it is inevitably crushed to atoms." The old creed sinks away; the new religion rises before us. It is belief in progress and in work—the love of, and strong devotion to, humanity, morality and truth for their own sakes—hostility to all social and political distinctions between the rights and privileges of men; the recognition of the sacredness of personal, political, social and religious freedom, of generous education by government, and of equal opportunities of obtaining labor, and equal pay for equal amounts of labor—deep sympathy for every earnest human effort—the assertion of the duties of free inquiry, and impartial investigation previous to the adoption of opinion—the assertion of the right and duty of free speech—hostility to all cant and hypocrisy—the belief in no duties except those implied by the relation between man and man—and the recognition of a God not anthropomorphic and a dweller in some undiscovered spot outside of the universe, but the sum of all the laws and forces which pervade the universe and every portion of it, and which give life, motion and beauty to all nature.

Towards a religion more or less like this, most of the great freethinkers for the last hundred years have striven. Let this religion be once recognised—let its friends be once dominant, and we shall have no more complaints that Christianity cannot be replaced—no more complaints that society cannot exist without the Bible. The safest basis for morality is to be found in political and social freedom and equality, in thorough and universal popular education, and in pecuniary prosperity, which last indeed must follow the other three. Of all these the freethinkers are and long have been the truest and most zealous friends; wherever there is a school of freethinkers, there they are fighting in the van of the progressive party for education and freedom. Let it not be supposed that if they obtain power they will turn about and become more conservative than the creed-worshippers, who, as a class, have op-

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

Biblical Miracles. Ch. XVI.

§ 92. "In actual modern life, belief in a supernatural manifestation, an immediate divine agency is at once attributed to ignorance or imposture." *Strauss.*

"Supernatural agency has long since ceased to interfere with human affairs." *George Combe. Constitution of Man.*

"He [Jesus] regarded his miracles as an infallible proof of his doctrine." *Pascal.*

"The first author who stated fairly the connection between the evidence of testimony and the evidence of experience, was Hume in his Essay on Miracles; a work abounding in maxims of great use in the conduct of life." *Edinburgh Review Sept.* 1814.

"It forms a strong presumption against all supernatural and miraculous relations, that they are observed chiefly to abound among ignorant and barbarous nations: or if a civilized people has ever given admission to any of them, that people will be found to have received them from ignorant and barbarous ancestors, who transmitted them with that inviolable sanction and authority which always attend received opinions. * * * It is strange, a judicious reader is apt to say, upon the perusal of these wonderful histories, that such prodigious events never happen in our days. But it is nothing strange I hope, that men should lie in all ages." *Hume.*

"An historian ought not to dissemble the difficulty of defining with precision the limits of that happy period, exempt from error and from deceit, to which we might be disposed to extend the gift of supernatural powers. From the first of the fathers to the last of the Popes, a succession of bishops, of saints, of martyrs, and of miracles is continued without interruption; and the progress of superstition was so gradual and almost imperceptible, that we know not in what particular link we should break the chain of tradition." *Gibbon.*

Miraculous Cure by Vespasian.

"Of all the miraculous cures on record, the best attested are those of the blind man and the paralytic man, whom Vespasian cured of their ailments. These miracles were done in Alexandria, before a multitude of people, Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians, and

Digitized by Google

the Emperor was at the time on his throne. He did not seek popularity, of which the emperor of Rome, firmly established on his seat, had no need. The two unfortunate men threw themselves in his way, and begged to be cured. He blushed for them and ridiculed their prayer. He said that such a cure was beyond the power of man: but the two unfortunates insisted, and asserted that the god Serapis had appeared to them and assured them that they should be cured by the miraculous power of Vespasian. Finally he consented to utter the words, but he did so without any expectation of success, and on the instant the blind man was restored to see, and the lame man to walk without imperfection. Alexandria, Egypt, and the whole empire were filled with the fame of the event; and the record of the miracles was placed in the archives of State, and preserved in all the contemporary histories. Nevertheless this miracle is now believed by nobody, because nobody has any interest in maintaining it."—*Voltaire.—Essai sur les Miracles.*

Miracle at Tipasa.

"Tipasa, a maritime colony of Mauritania, was purely orthodox, and had braved the fury of the Donatists and the tyranny of the Arians. Their disobedience exasperated the cruelty of Hunneric; a military count was dispatched from Carthage to Tipasa; he collected the Catholics in the forum, and in the presence of the whole province, deprived the guilty of their right hands and of their tongues. But the holy confessors continued to speak without tongues; and this miracle is attested by Victor, an African bishop, who published a history of the persecution within two years after the event. 'If any one' says Victor, 'should doubt the truth, let him repair to Constantinople, and listen to the clear and perfect language of Restitutus, the sub-deacon, one of these glorious sufferers, who is now lodged in the palace of the Emperor Zeno, and is respected by the devout Empress.' At Constantinople, we are astonished to find a cool, learned, and unexceptionable witness, without interest and without passion. Æneas of Gaza, a Platonic Philosopher, has accurately described his own observation on these African sufferers:—'I saw them myself, I heard them speak, I diligently inquired by what means such an articulate voice could be formed without any organ of speech; I used my eyes to examine the report of my ear; I opened their mouths, and saw that their whole tongues had been completely torn away by the roots—an operation which the physicians generally suppose to be mortal.' The testimony of Æneas of Gaza might be confirmed by the superfluous evidence of the Emperor Justinian, in a perpetual edict; of Count Marcellinus in his chronicle of the times; and of Pope Gregory the First, who had resided at Constantinople, as the minister of the Roman Pontiff. They all lived within the compass of a century; and they all appeal to their personal knowledge, or to the public notoriety for the

truth of the miracle, which was repeated in several instances, displayed on the greatest theatrè of the world, and submitted during a series of years to the calm examination of the senses."—*Gibbon.—Decline and Fall. Ch. XXXVII.*

Miracles at the Tomb of Abbe Paris.

The miracles reported to have been done about 1650. A. D., at the tomb of Abbe Paris, the Jansenist, in the city of Paris, are famous in history. The Rev. Dr. Middleton gives the following account of them:

"Within six years after his [Abbe Paris'] death, the confident report of miracles wrought at his tomb, began to alarm not only the city of Paris, but the whole nation; while infinite crowds were continually passing to the place and proclaiming the benefits received from the saint, nor could all the power of the government give a check to the rapidity of the superstition, till by closing the tomb within a wall, they effectually obstructed all access to it.

"This expedient though it put an end to the external worship of the saint, could not shake the credit of his miracles; distinct accounts of which were carefully drawn up, and dispersed among the people, with an attestation of them, much more strong and authentic, than what has ever been alleged for the miracles of any other age since the days of the apostles. Mons. de Montgeron, a person of eminent rank in Paris, (Counsellor to the Parliament), published a select number of them, in a pompous volume in quarto, which he dedicated to the king, and presented to him in person, being induced to the publication of them, as he declares, by the incontestible evidence of the facts; by which he himself, a libertine and professed deist, became a sincere convert to the Christian faith. But, besides the collection of M. de Montgeron, several other collections were made containing in the whole above a hundred miracles, which are all published together in three volumes, with their original vouchers, certificates, affidavits and letters annexed to each of them at full length.

"The greatest part of these miracles were employed in the cure of desperate diseases in their last and deplored state, and after all human remedies had for many years been tried upon them in vain; but the patients no sooner addressed themselves to the tomb of this saint, than the most inveterate cases, and complications of palsies, apoplexies, and dropsies, and even blindness and lameness, &c., were either instantly cured or greatly relieved, and within a short time after wholly removed. All which cures were performed in the church-yard of St. Medard, in the open view of the people, and with so general a belief of the finger of God in them that many infidels, debauchees, schismatics, and heretics are said to have been converted by them to the Catholic faith. And the reality of them is attested by some of the principal physicians and surgeons in

France, as well as the clergy of the first dignity, several of whom were eye-witnesses of them, who presented a *verbal process* (*proces-verbal*) to each of the archbishops, with a petition signed by about twenty *cures* or rectors of the parishes of Paris, desiring that they might be authentically registered, and solemnly published to the people as true miracles."

On the wall erected, about the tomb to keep away the crowd and stop the miracles, some scoffer posted up the following epigram—

'De par le Roi, defense a Dieu,
De faire miracles dans ce lieu.'

(By order of the king, God is forbidden to work miracles in this place.)

Miraculous Cure of Pascal's Niece.

"Mademoiselle Perrier was a niece of Blaize Pascal. She was a child in her eleventh year, and a scholar residing in the monastery of Port Royal. For three years and a half she had been afflicted with a *fistula lachrymalis*. The adjacent bones had become carious, and the most loathsome ulcers disfigured her countenance. All remedies had been tried in vain; the medical faculty had exhausted their resources. * * * Now it came to pass that M. de la Potherie, a Parisian ecclesiastic, and an assiduous collector of relics, had possessed himself of one of the thorns from the crown worn by Christ just previous to the crucifixion. Great had been the curiosity of the various convents to see it, and the ladies of Port Royal had earnestly solicited the privilege. Accordingly on the 24th of March, in the year 1656, a solemn procession of nuns, novices and scholars moved along the aisles of the monastic church, chanting appropriate hymns, and each one in her turn kissing the holy relic. When the turn of Madamoiselle Perrier arrived, she, by the advice of the school-mistress, touched her diseased eye with the thorn, not doubting but that it would effect a cure. She regained her room and her malady was gone. The cure was instantaneous and complete. * * * All Paris rang with the story. It reached the ear of the Queen Mother. By her command M. Felix, the principal surgeon to the king, investigated and confirmed the narrative. * * * The greatest genius, the most profound scholar, and the most eminent advocate of that age, all possessing the most ample means of knowledge, all carefully investigated, all admitted, and all defended with their pens, the miracle of the Holy Thorn. Europe, at that time, produced no three men more profoundly conversant with the laws of the material world, with the laws of the human mind, and with the municipal law, than Pascal, Arnauld and Le Maitre; and they were all sincere and earnest believers. Yet our Protestant incredulity utterly rejects both the tale itself and the inferences drawn from it, and but for such

Digitized by Google

mighty names might yield to the temptation of regarding it as too contemptible for serious notice."—*Edinburgh Review, July* 1841.

The De Retz Miracle.

"There is also a memorable story, related by Cardinal De Retz, (in his Memoirs) which may well deserve our consideration. When that intriguing politician fled into Spain to avoid the persecution of his enemies, he passed through Saragossa, the capital of Arragon, where he was shewn in the cathedral a man, who had served seven years as a doorkeeper, and was well known to everybody in town that had ever paid his devotions at that church. He had been seen for so long a time wanting a leg, but recovered that limb by the rubbing of holy oil upon the stump : and the Cardinal assures us, that he saw him with two legs. This miracle was vouched by all the canons of the church ; and the whole company in town were appealed to for a confirmation of the fact, whom the Cardinal found, by their zealous devotion, to be thorough believers of the miracle. Here the relater was also contemporary to the supposed prodigy, of an incredulous and libertine character, as well as of great genius ; the miracle of so singular a nature as could scarcely admit of a counterfeit, and the witnesses very numerous, and all of them, in a manner, spectators of the fact, to which they gave their testimony. And what adds mightily to the force of this evidence, and may double our surprise on this occasion, is that the Cardinal himself, who relates the story, seems not to give any credit to it, and consequently cannot be suspected of any concurrence in the holy fraud. He considered justly that it was not requisite, in order to reject a fact of this nature, to be able accurately to disprove the testimony, and to trace its falsehood through all the circumstances of knavery and credulity which produced it. He knew that as this was commonly altogether impossible, at any small distance of place, so it was extremely difficult, even where one was immediately present, by reason of the bigotry, ignorance, cunning and roguery of a great portion of mankind. He therefore concluded, like a just reasoner, that such an evidence carried falsehood on the very face of it, and that a miracle, supported by any human testimony, was more properly a subject of derision than of argument."—*Hume.*

"The monks of succeeding [the dark] ages, who in their peaceful solitudes, entertained themselves with diversifying the deaths and sufferings of the primitive martyrs, have frequently invented torments of a very refined and ingenious nature. In particular it has pleased them to suppose that the zeal of the Roman magistrates, disdaining every consideration of moral virtue or public decency, endeavored to seduce those whom they could not vanquish, and that by their orders the most brutal violence was offered to those whom they found it impossible to seduce. It is related that

Digitized by Google

pious females who were prepared to despise death, were sometimes condemned to a more severe trial, and called upon to determine whether they set a higher value on their religion or their chastity. The youths to whose licentious embraces they were abandoned, received a solemn exhortation from the judge, to exert their most strenuous efforts to maintain the honor of Venus against the impious virgin who refused to burn incense on her altars. Their violence, however, was commonly disappointed, and the seasonable interposition of some miraculous power preserved the chaste spouses of Christ from the dishonor even of an involuntary defeat."—*Gibbon.*

Miracles of Spiritualism.

The wonders of American Spiritualism are no less miraculous than the alleged miracles of Jesus; and are attested by an infinitely greater amount of testimony. Among these Spiritualistic wonders are inexplicable rappings, moving of tables and other articles of furniture, without the influence of any discoverable physical agency; the playing of tunes upon guitars and pianos in like mysterious manner; the speaking of many foreign tongues by persons, who, in their normal condition, understand only their own; the knowledge of the thoughts of other persons; the power of discovering things hidden to the ordinary senses, etc. Among the living witnesses who are mentioned in the books of the Spiritualists as being able to testify to various of these wonders, I find the names of N. P. Tallmadge and James F. Simmons, ex-members of the U.S. Senate; E. D. Culver, Waddy Thompson, and H. P. Hascall, ex-members of the U. S. House of Representatives; James Hamilton, ex-Governor of South Carolina; John W. Edmonds, ex-Judge of the Supreme Court of New York; John G. Whittier; Fennimore Cooper; Judge Charles H. Larrabee, of Wisconsin; Judge Willie P. Fowler, of Kentucky; Judge R. P. Spaulding, of Ohio, and innumerable others. To this list I might add the names of many honest and intelligent persons of my own acquaintance.

Miracles of Witchcraft.

"There is far more testimony to prove the fact of miracles, witchcraft, and diabolical possession, in times comparatively modern, than to prove the Christian miracles. It is well known that the most credible writers among the early Christians, Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, Theodoret, and others, believed that the miraculous power continued in great vigor in their time. But to come down still later, the case of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, is more to the point. He lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. His life has been written in part by William, Abbot of St. Thierry, Ernald, Abbot of Bonnevaux, and Geoffry, Abbot of Igny, "all eye-witnesses of the Saint's actions." Another life was written by Alanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and still another by

Digitized by Google

John the Hermit, not long after the death of Bernard, both his contemporaries. Besides, there are three books on his miracles, one by Philip of Clairvaux, another by the monks of that place, and a third by the above-mentioned Geoffrey. He cures the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the blind, men possessed with devils, in many cases before multitudes of people. He wrought thirty-six miracles in a single day, says one of his historians; converted men and women that could not understand the language he spoke in. His wonders are set down by the eye-witnesses themselves, men known to us by the testimony of others. I do not hesitate in saying that there is far more evidence to support the miracles of St. Bernard, than those mentioned in the New Testament.

"But we are to accept such testimony with great caution. The tendency of men to believe the thing happens which they expect to happen—the tendency of rumor to exaggerate a real occurrence into a surprising or miraculous affair, is well known. A century and a half have not gone by since witches were tried by a special court in Massachusetts, convicted by a jury of twelve good men and true, preached against by the clergy, and executed by the common hangman. Any one who looks carefully into the matter, sees more evidence for the reality of these 'wonders of the invisible world,' than for the Christian miracles. Here is the testimony of scholars, clergymen, witnesses examined under oath, jurymen and judges; the confession of honest men; of persons whose character is well known at the present day, to prove the reality of witchcraft, and the actual occurrence of miraculous facts; of the interference of powers more than human in the affairs of man. The appearance of the Devil 'as a little black man,' of spectres and ghosts, the power of witches to ride through the air, overturn a ship, raise storms, and torture men at a distance, is attested by a cloud of witnesses, perfectly overshadowing to a man of easy faith. In the celebrated case of Richard Dugdale, the 'Surey Demoniac,' or 'Surey Impostor'—which occurred in the latter part of the seventeenth century, in England, and was a most notorious affair—we have the testimony of nine dissenting clergymen, to prove his diabolical miracles, all of them familiar with the 'Demoniac,'—and also the depositions of many credible persons, sworn to before two magistrates, to confirm the wonder." *Parker.*"

Miracles are "operations contrary to the fixed and established laws of nature." *Locke.*

"In those days [50 A. D.] among that people [the Jews] miracles were so much in course, that without a reasonable number of them, a history would hardly have obtained credence; at any rate it would not have obtained readers, and without readers, no history can ever obtain much credence."

"I am the better pleased with the method of reasoning here de-

Digitized by Google

livered, as I think it may serve to confound those dangerous friends or disguised enemies to the Christian religion, who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason: our most holy religion is founded on faith, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it, to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure. To make this more evident, let us examine those miracles related in Scripture; and not to lose ourselves in too wide a field, let us confine ourselves to such as we find in the Pentateuch, which we shall examine according to the principles of these pretended Christians, not as the word or testimony of God himself, but as the production of a mere human writer and historian. Here then we are first to consider a book presented to us by a barbarous and ignorant people, written in an age when they were still more barbarous, and in all probability long after the facts which it relates, corroborated by no concurring testimony, and resembling those fabulous accounts which every nation gives of its origin. Upon reading this book we find it full of prodigies and miracles. It gives an account of the state of the world and of human nature entirely different from the present, of our fall from that state, of the age of man extending to near a thousand years, of the destruction of the world by a deluge, of the arbitrary choice of one people as the favorites of Heaven—and that people the countrymen of the author—and of their deliverance from bondage by prodigies the most astonishing imaginable. I desire any one to lay his hand upon his heart, and after a serious consideration, declare whether he thinks that the falsehood of such a book, supported by such testimony, would be more extraordinary and miraculous than all the miracles it relates; which is however necessary to make it be received according to the measures of probability. What we have said of miracles may be applied without any variation to prophecies: and indeed all prophecies are real miracles, and as such only can be admitted as proof of any revelation. If it did not exceed the capacity of human nature to foretell human events, it would be absurd to employ any prophecy as argument for a divine mission or authority from Heaven. So, that upon the whole, we may conclude that the Christian religion was not only at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one."—*Hume's Essay on Miracles.*

"It does not appear that these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost were common in the church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian; and from a vain imagination of promoting the Christian cause thereby, heaped riches, and power, and honor, upon the Christians in general; but, in particular, upon the Christian clergy. From this time they almost totally ceased; very few instances of the kind were found. The cause

Digitized by Google

of this was not (as has been vulgarly supposed, 'because there was no more occasion for them,' because all the world had become Christians. This is a miserable mistake; not a twentieth part of it was then nominally Christian. The real cause was, 'the love of many,' almost of all Christians, so called, was 'waxed cold.' The Christians had no more the Spirit of Christ than the other Heathens. The Son of Man when he came to examine his church, could hardly find faith upon the earth."—*John Wesley*, 94*th Sermon.*

Rousseau on Miracles.

"MAN. 'Apostle of truth, what have you to say to me of which my reason cannot judge?'

PRIEST. 'God himself has spoken. Listen to his revelation.'

M. 'That is another matter. God has spoken! The word is a great one. And to whom did he speak? Why have I heard nothing of his voice?'

P. 'He has commissioned other men to bear a message to you.'

M. 'I understand: these are men who come to tell me what God has told them. I should prefer that he had spoken to me immediately: it would have given him no trouble, and would have protected me from deception.'

P. 'He does protect you, by giving proof of the divine authority of his ministers.'

M. 'How?'

P. 'By miracles.'

M. 'Where are these miracles?'

P. 'They are recorded in books.'

M. 'And who made the books?'

P. 'Men.'

M. 'And who saw the miracles?'

P. 'The men who bear witness to them.'

M. 'What, always human testimony! Always men who report to me what other men have reported! How many men between God and me! However, let me see, examine, compare, verify. O, if God had spared me this labor, would I have served him with less zeal?'

"Consider, my friend, in what a horrible discussion I am here engaged; what immense learning is necessary for my ascent into the most remote antiquity, to examine, weigh, compare the prophecies, the revelations, the facts, all the monuments of faith offered in all the countries of the world, to know their dates, places, authors and occasions of their origin! What nicety of criticism is necessary to distinguish the genuine from the spurious documents, to compare the translations with the originals, the objections with the replies: to judge of the impartiality, the intelligence and the general reliability of witnesses; to know whether anything has been suppressed, added, transposed, changed or falsified; and to explain the contra-

Digitized by Google

dictions. * * The monuments being admitted to be genuine, it will be necessary to pass to the testimony of the mission of the authors; it will be necessary to understand the law of probabilities, to know what prediction may be fulfilled without a miracle; to understand the genius of the oriental languages, so as to be able to distinguish predictions from oratorical figures; to comprehend the laws of Nature and know what are natural events and what are not; to know how far an adroit man may blind the eyes of the ignorant and astonish those of the intelligent; to study what kind of a prodigy should command belief, and when the proof would become so strong that its rejection would deserve punishment; to compare the testimony of true and false miracles and find certain methods of distinguishing between them; and finally to understand why God, for the purpose of attesting his word, should resorted to proof which itself requires to be proved, as if he were playing with the credulity of men, and intentionally neglected the only proper means of convincing them." *Emile.*

R. W. Mackay on Miracles.

"Miracles die out when they approach the confines of civilization; and the duration of human life and the general course of nature, fall into the routine of common experience. Phenomena, which before appeared arbitrary acts of power, assume, when connected and compared, an intelligible aspect as orderly results of law. Seeming exceptions to the usual succession of events are rarely seen, and their exceptional character is at once felt to be only apparent and deceptive. Men have never yet attained, and believe to be unattainable, that absolute and exhaustive knowledge of physical causes, which would be necessary for the satisfactory attestation of miracle. Miracle, as it must now be understood, implies something inconsistent with the order of a perfect government, something overlooked in the original plan, requiring an interpolation contrary to its general tenor. This contradiction was never contemplated by the ancients. Their imaginations were excited, by what was strange, to look to a divine agent; but it was precisely from the defective notions of the order of the whole, that they recognized a peculiar divinity in the exceptional. * * A perfect and immutable being cannot break his own laws, or be at variance with himself; his power is only commensurate with his will; he cannot, because he will not, do that which would be inconsistent, prejudicial and unjust. And why should the order of nature be disturbed for the sake of those who, submitting the understanding to the eye, and demanding signs or wonders as an indispensable condition of belief, may discover them abundantly in the uncomprehended order of natural events? Why derange a machinery so vast, so perfect in its connection, and so infinite in its relations, in order to effect a doubtful surprise or obscure conviction among

Digitized by Google

the most ignorant of mankind, whose authority as witnesses must ever, from the imperfection of their knowledge, be open to exception, and remain insufficient to transfer the impressions at first received through the long series of skeptical generations? It is not incredible that God can raise the dead, for his ability to do so is abundantly evident in nature; it is incredible only that he should do so, in a manner inconsistent with his own eternal laws; and it would have been no irrational inference which should have ascribed an admitted infraction of those laws to Beelzebub, to demoniacal influence instead of divine. * * But the hypothesis of miracle has lost its usefulness, as well as a large share of its popularity. It no longer promotes a spirit of piety when God is rather studied in the known, than guessed at through the unknown, when the ordinary and regular is acknowledged to be more truly divine than the strange and accidental. Addressed to the ignorant and unthinking, it produces no permanent conviction of comprehensive beneficence and wisdom. It substitutes disarrangement and anarchy for certainty and order. Uninstructive, because defying all comparison and analogy, it leads to no useful lesson but that which is better proved without its assistance. It is no more necessary to the present support of Christianity, than those usages of the ceremonial law discarded at its outset. A belief in the miraculous, or Messianic character of Jesus, was in his own day the most decisive test of superiority to vulgar prejudice, and of a disposition to conform to the spiritualism of Christianity; now circumstances are reversed, for, by a strange misapprehension of the nature and objects of faith, the weightier matters of charity and justice are deprived of their due preponderance, and made secondary to a blind belief in the supernatural and mystical. But belief in miracle is worse than useless; it creates false notions of God's nature and government; it arms the imagination against the reason; it discourages the cultivation of the intellect, and darkens the path of duty. It demoralizes, by superseding prudential care, and the feeling of immediate responsibility. It removes God from the world, and brings him back again only by a convulsive start of superstitious amazement. The supposition of a partial and capricious government of nature, has much the same effect as if it were unhappily realized. When Ulysses ascribed to God the effects of his own negligence in forgetting his cloak, or when Ajax considered his falling on slippery ground to be the injurious act of Minerva, the real causes of these mischances would probably be unheeded and uncorrected."—*Progress of the Intellect. I.* 6.

Biblical Prophecies—Ch. XVII.

§ 95. If there be any genuine prophecies in the Bible, there are many recorded outside of it, much more wonderful, and much better attested.

Digitized by Google

Cazotte's Prophecy of the French Revolution.

The most wonderful prediction of which record has been made, and to which credit has been given to by modern writers of high enlightenment and of unquestioned honesty, is that of the French Revolution by M. Cazotte. The principal record is that of La Harpe, a learned and upright man, who had been a Christian for many years before his death. The record was found, in his own handwriting, among his papers, after his death, and it was published in his *Posthumous Memoirs* (*Paris.* 1806, *vol. I. p.* 62). The following is a translation :—

"It seems to me, as though it had occurred yesterday, but it was in the beginning of 1788. We were at the table of a fellow-member of the Academy, a prominent and talented man. The company was large, and composed of persons of many different stations in life—courtiers, judges, learned men, academicians, etc. They had, as usual, enjoyed the pleasures of a well-set table. After the substantial part of the meal had been finished, the Malvoisier and the Cape wine contributed to heighten the jollity, and increased that kind of free-spirit which does not always observe any certain limits.

"The state of society permitted the utterance of anything which might contribute to raise a laugh. Chamfort had read to us from his impious and obscene stories, and the noble ladies listened without even using their fans to hide their faces. Then came a flood of satirical remarks, ridiculing religion. One quoted a passage from the *Pucelle* ; another called up that verse of Diderot, wherein he praises the time when the last king shall be hung with an intestine of the last priest ; and all clapped applause Another arose, with a full glass in his hand, and speaking loudly, said, 'Yes, gentlemen, I am as certain that there is no God, as I am certain that Homer was a fool !' And, indeed, he was as certain of the truth of the one statement as of the other. God and Homer had been the subjects of conversation a short time before, and there were persons present who had spoken well of both.

"The conversation became more serious. The company spoke with astonishment of the revolution which Voltaire had effected, and all agreed that it was the chief foundation of his glory. He had given character to his century ; he had written so that he was read by the poor as well as the rich. One of the guests related, amidst great laughter, that his hair-dresser, while powdering him, said, 'Indeed, sir, though I am only a poor barber, I have no more religion than others.' The general opinion was that the revolution would soon be complete, and that superstition and fanaticism would have to give place entirely to philosophy ; and they calculated the time which would probably be required for the completion of the revolution, and speculated as to who of the company should have the happiness to see the reign of reason. The elder ones regretted that they could not expect it. The younger ones rejoiced in hopeful

Digitized by Google

probability that they should see it; and especial honor was done to the Academy, for laying the foundation of the great work, by being the central home, the focus, and the spur of free-thought.

"One only of the guests had taken no part in all these joyous amusements, and had even thrown in slyly, here and there, a satirical remark, aimed at our beautiful enthusiasm. That one was M. Cazotte, an estimable and original man, who, however, was, unfortunately, a follower of the dreams of those believing in a higher light than reason. He now spoke in an earnest manner, 'Gentlemen, congratulate yourselves: you all shall witness that great and sublime revolution which you so much wish to see. You know that I have paid some attention to prophecy: I repeat it to you: you shall witness the revolution.'

"No prophetic gift is necessary to foresee that," remarked one.

'That is true' replied he 'but the case may be different with something more that I have to say to you. Do you know what will be the result of this revolution, wherein reason is to be the antagonist of revealed religion—what will be its consequence for you, who are here present?—what will be its immediate, undesirable and recognised influence?'

'Let us see' said Condorcet on his simple way 'it does a philosopher good to meet a prophet.'

'You Monsieur Condorcet,' continued Cazotte 'you, lying stretched out on the floor of an underground prison, will die by poison administered by your own hand to save yourself from the executioner—poison which you will be compelled, by the happiness of that time, to carry with you constantly.'

This language caused great astonishment at first, but the company remembered that Cazotte was given to dreaming dreams, and presently broke out into loud laughter. 'Monsieur Cazotte' said one of the guests, 'that story is not so amusing as your *Devil in Love* (*Le Diable Amoureux* was the title of a witty novelette by Cazotte). What the deuce has inspired you with these thoughts of the prison, poison. and the executioner? What have they to do with philosophy and the reign of reason?'

'That is precisely what I say' answered Cazotte. 'In the name of Philosophy, in the name of Humanity, and of Freedom, under Reason, it will happen that you shall come to such an end; and then reason will certainly reign, for she will have temples; yes, in all France there will then be no other temples than those of reason.'

'Verily, said Chamfort with a scornful smile,' 'you will not be one of the priests in those temples.'

'I hope not' replied Cazotte; 'but you Monsieur de Chamfort, will be one of those priests, and worthy of the position, you will

Digitized by Google

open your veins by twenty-two cuts with the razor, and yet will not die till several months afterwards.'

The company looked and laughed.

Cazotte continued 'You Monsieur Vicq d'Azyr, you will not open your veins yourself; but in a fit of gout, you will have them opened six times, to be more certain of the thing, and you will die in the night.'

'You, Monsieur Nicolai, will die upon the scaffold!'

'You Monsieur Bailly. upon the scaffold.'

'You, Monsieur de Malesherbes, upon the scaffold!'

'God be praised!' said Monsieur Roucher, 'it appears that Monsieur Cazotte is only going to dispose of the Academy: he has made a horrible butchery among them: as for me, Heaven be praised—'

'Cazotte interrupted him, 'You?—you will die on the scaffold!'

'Ha! this is a butchery,' they called out on all sides; 'he has sworn to exterminate us!'

He replied 'No! I have sworn no such thing!'

The company said—'Then we are to be subjugated by the Turks and Tartars? and then.'

He answered—'By no means: I have already told you that you would then be under the government of philosophy and reason: they who shall treat you in that manner shall be all philosophers; they shall speak only in such phrases as you have been using for the last hour, will repeat all your maxims, like you will put forward the verses of the *Pucelle* and Diderot!'

The company began to whisper to each other 'You see he's crazy'—(for he remained very serious all this time)—'Do you not see, he's joking!'—'And you know he mixes some wonderful stuff in all his jokes!' 'But' said Chamfort 'I must confess his wonderful stuff is not amusing: it smacks too much of the gallows! And when is all this to come to pass?'

Cazotte replied 'Before six years shall have passed, everything that I have said will be fulfilled!'

'There are many wonders' said I [LaHarpe] 'but you say nothing of me?'

'To you,' said Cazotte 'a wonder shall happen not less extraordinary: you will be a Christian!'

Here there was a general outcry, 'I am quieted.' said Chamfort, 'if death comes to us only when LaHarpe turns Christian, we shall live for ever!'

'We women,' said then the Dutchess of Grammont, 'are fortunate, that we are counted as nothing in the revolutions. When I say *as nothing*, I mean that we shall be concerned only a little; but little attention is paid to us.'

CAZOTTE. 'Ladies, your sex will on this occasion not protect

Digitized by Google

you, and you may mix in *nothing* as much as you please: you will be treated like the men, and no difference will be made for your sex.'

The Dutchess. 'Why, Monsieur Cazotte, what are you talking about? Are you preaching the end of the world?'

Cazotte. 'I do not know about that; but what I do know, is that you, *Madame la Duchesse*, will be borne to the scaffold,—you and many ladies with you—upon the hangman's cart, with your hands bound behind you!'

The Dutchess. 'In such case, I hope to have a coach covered with mourning.'

Cazotte. 'No, madam! Ladies of higher rank than yourself will be borne on the hangman's cart, with their hands tied at their backs.'

The Dutchess. 'Of higher rank?—How?—Princesses of the Blood Royal?'

Cazotte. 'Yet higher!'

There was now a perceptible commotion in the company, and the host began to frown; it was plain that the joke was carried too far. Madame de Grammont, to dissipate the cloud, allowed his last remark to go without an answer, and contented herself with saying in a joking manner, 'You will see that he will not ever leave me the consolation of a confessor.'

Cazotte. 'No, Madame! You nor no one else snall have any! The last victim, who for mercy, shall be allowed a confessor, will be ——' Here he hesitated.

The Dutchess. 'Well, who is then the happy one, to whom this happy privilege will be granted?'

Cazette. 'It will be the only privilege granted him; and he will be the King of France!'

The host now rose hastily from the table, and every one with him. He went to Cazotte, and said to him, in an excited manner, 'My dear Monsieur Cazotte, this mournful joke has lasted too long. You carry it too far, and to such a degree, that you expose yourself and the whole company to danger!'

Cazotte did not reply, but started to go away; but Madame de Grammont, who was determined to prevent the thing from being taken seriously, if she could restore the jollity, went to him and said, 'Now, sir prophet, you have foretold something for us all, but of your own fate, you say nothing?'

He was silent, cast down his eyes, and then spoke, 'Madame, have you read in Josephus the history of the Siege of Jerusalem?'

The Dutchess. 'Certainly! who has not read it? But you speak as though you supposed I had not read it!'

"Well, madame, during that siege, a man went about the walls of the city for seven consecutive days, in the view of the besiegers and besieged, and cried out constantly, with a mournful voice, 'Woe

to Jerusalem! Woe to Jerusalem!' and on the seventh day he cried out, 'Woe to Jerusalem! and Woe to me!' and at that instant, an immense stone, thrown by the machines of the enemy, crushed him.

"After these words, Monsieur Cazotte made his bow and went away."

So far La Harpe. Of course such testimony, that of a dead man, who cannot be cross-examined, taken alone, cannot suffice to prove such a wonderful statement. But we find some singular testimony in corroboration. Jung Stilling, whose honesty and intelligence will not be denied by any person of learning, writing within twenty-five years after the date of the alleged prophecy, says (*Geisterkunde*, § 149) "I can prove that the story is literally true in letter and in spirit. I have spoken with a gentleman of rank, very trustworthy, who knew Cazotte well, and had spoken with him about the prediction. This gentlemen assured me that Cazotte was a very pious and very learned man, who often made the most wonderful predictions which were always verified by the event."

M. le Comte A. de Montesquieu having heard Madame de Genlis say that she had heard La Harpe speak of Cazotte's prediction, requested her for more details. She wrote—

"NOVEMBER 1825.

I think I have somewhere placed among my souvenirs the anecdote of M. Cazotte, but I am not sure. I have heard it related a hundred times by M. de Le Harpe before the revolution and always in the same form as I have read it in print, and as he himself has caused it to be printed. This is all that I can say, or certify, or authenticate by my signature.

COMTESSE de GENLIS."

M. le Baron Delamothe Langon wrote to M. Mialle.

"You inquire of me, my dear friend, what I know concerning the famous prediction of Cazotte, mentioned by La Harpe. I have only on this subject to assure you on my honor, that I have heard Madame la Comtesse de Beauharnais many times assert that she was present at this very singular historical fact. She related it always in the same way, and with the accent of truth: her evidence fully corroborated that of La Harpe. She spoke thus before all the persons of the society in which she moved, many of whom still live, and could equally attest this assertion. * * *

BARON DELAMOTHE LANGON.

PARIS Dec. 18th. 1833."

Lacretelle in his *Histoire de la Revolution Francaise* relates the circumstances of the death of Cazotte by the guillotine. He met death most composedly—slept soundly shortly before the hour fixed for his execution. At the foot of the scaffold he said "I die as I have lived—true to my God and my country." His daughter was attached to him with the most heroic devotion and once saved his

Digitized by Google

life by insisting that the executioners should slay her first: and as she was only seventeen years of age, they spared her father for her sake. Lacretelle says Cazotte "author of several agreeable [literary] productions, beloved in society for the uprightness [*loyauté*] of his character, and his lively wit, had given himself in his old age to a religious exaltation so ardent that he believed himself to receive revelations from heaven. The horrors of a revolution were present to his mind long before it broke out. Many philosophers, if the singular recital of La Harpe is to be believed, had reason to remember Cazotte when death came upon them: for he had foretold how each one should die, and he predicted also his own sad end."

La Harpe's story has been received with credit and published as true by Stilling in his *Geisterkunde*, Gregory in his *Letters on Animal Magnetism*, and H. G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau in their letters on *Man's Nature and Development.*

Prophecy of Josephine's Greatness.

Memes, in his biography of the Empress Josephine, thus records the famous prophecy of Josephine's royal destiny: "On one of these occasions, an incident occurred, the only one recorded of her early years, which exercised an influence, at least over her imagination, almost to the latest hour of her existence. The following is the narrative, in her own words, as she long afterwards related the circumstances to the ladies of her court:—

"One day, some time before my first marriage, while taking my usual walk, I observed a number of negro girls assembled round an old woman, engaged in telling their fortunes. I drew near to observe their proceedings. The old Sibyl, on beholding me, uttered a loud exclamation, and almost by force seized my hand. She appeared to be under the greatest agitation. Amused at these absurdities, as I thought them, I allowed her to proceed, saying, 'So you discover something extraordinary in my destiny?' 'Yes.' 'Is happiness or misfortune to be my lot?' 'Misfortune. Ah, stop! and happiness too.' 'You take care not to commit yourself, my dame; your oracles are not the most intelligible.' 'I am not permitted to render them more clear', said the woman, raising her eyes with a mysterious expression towards heaven. 'But to the point', replied I, for my curiosity began to be excited; 'what read you concerning me in futurity?' 'What do I see in the future? You will not believe me, if I speak.' 'Yes, indeed, I assure you. Come, my good mother, what am I to fear and hope?' 'On your own head be it then; listen! You will be married soon; that union will not be happy; you will become a widow, and then—then you will be Queen of France! Some happy years will be yours; but you will die in a hospital, amid civil commotion.'"

In regard to this prophecy, Alison, in his history of Uurope,

Digitized by Google

says, "The history of Josephine had been very remarkable. She was born in the West Indies: and it had early been prophesied by an old negress, that she should lose her first husband, be extremely unfortunate, but that she should afterwards be greater than a queen. This prophecy, the authenticity of which is placed beyond a doubt, was fulfilled in the most singular manner. Her first husband, Alexander Beauharnois, a general in the army of the Rhine, had been guillotined, during the Reign of Terror: and she herself, who was also imprisoned at the same time, was only saved from impending death by the fall of Robespierre. So strongly was the prophecy impressed on her mind, that, while lying in the dungeons of the Conciergerie, expecting every hour to be summoned to the Revolutionary Tribunal, she mentioned it to her fellow-prisoners, and to amuse them, named some of them as ladies of the bedchamber; a jest which she afterwards lived to realize to one of their number."

Alison adds in a note, "The author heard of this prophecy long before Napoleon's elevation to the throne, from the late Countess of Bath and the Countess of Ancram, who were educated in the same convent with Josephine, and had repeatedly heard her mention the circumstance in early youth."

"A prophetical pamphlet, published in 1651, by the famous astrologer Lilly, was thought to be so signally verified by the great fire of London, that the author was summoned before the House of Commons, and publicly requested there to favor them with his advice respecting the prospects of the nation."—*Edinburgh Review, July*, 1844.

Seneca in his *Medea* foretold the discovery of a western continent.

Berkeley's verses on America are more truly prophetic, than anything in the Bible.

Forbes, in his *Oriental Memoirs* (*Vol. II. Ch. IV*), gives an account of several wonderful Hindoo prophecies, which were verified by the event.

Mrs. Mowatt, now Mrs. Ritchie, states in her *Autobiography*, that when in Mesmeric trance (into which she was thrown during illness), she prophecied, truly and accurately, the times when she would be well and ill.

"The same prophecies frequently have a double meaning, and refer to different events, the one near, the other remote: the one temporal, the other spiritual or perhaps eternal."—*Horne. Introduction.*

Biblical Books not Genuine.—Ch. XXI.

"Moses wrote his book, the section concerning Balaam and *Job*. Joshua wrote his book and eight verses which are in the law. Samuel wrote his book, *Judges* and *Ruth*. David wrote his book

Digitized by Google

with the assistance of ten of the elders, Adam, Melchisedec, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Jeduthan, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Jeremiah wrote his book, the book of *Kings* and the *Lamentations*. Hezekiah [King of Judah] with his ministers wrote the prophecies of Isaiah, the *Proverbs*, the *Canticle*, and *Ecclesiastics*. The men of the Great Synagogue wrote *Ezekiel*, the twelve minor prophets, *Daniel* and *Esther*. Ezra wrote his book and the *Chronicles*."—*Talmud as quoted by Norton.*

"One circumstance which distinguishes this part of the historical Scriptures [the beginning of Genesis] from all others is the disjointed, and if we may so say, fragmentary character which belongs to the different passages of history; and it is singular that it should have been left for very recent times to make the observation, the truth of which is immediately evident to every reader whose attention has once been drawn to the subject, that the first portion of *Genesis* consists of several distinct and separate documents, which have been compiled or rather copied continuously and without alteration, and set down with their original titles even prefixed to each in the proemium to the Old Testament. The compiler appears to have been particularly careful to preserve each original document in its integrity without introducing even such verbal alterations as might have served to give the appearance of unity of composition. The principal of these documents are the following:

I. The Cosmogony. *Gen. I.* 1—*II.* 3.
2. Generations of the heaven and earth. *Gen. II.* 4—*III.* 24.
3. History of Cain, Abel and Seth; and genealogy of Cain's descendants.
4. The genealogies from Adam to Noah.
5. History of the sons of God or giants.
6. History of Noah and the deluge. *Gen. VI.—IX.* 29.
7. Genealogy of the sons of Noah, with a brief history of the nations descended from them. *Gen. X.*
8. History of Babel. *Gen. XI.* 1—9.
9. Genealogies from Shem to Abraham.
10. Genealogy of Terah. *Gen. XI.* 27—32. *Prichard, Phys. Hist. Note on Bib. Chronology.*

"I consider the evidence conclusive, particularly since the learned investigations of Ewald, who has heaped up the proof in excess, that the first general compilation of the Old Testament Scriptures was made, in no case before, but probably after the bloom-season of Hebrew poetry under the early kings, but at the same time, that some portions of the *Pentateuch*, such as the list of camping places in the wilderness, and some others may well have been composed in the time of Moses."—*Lepsius. Chronologie der Ægypter.*

Digitized by Google

The unreliable character of national traditions, even when illus trated by customs, and even monuments, has a striking example in the Athenian tradition of the Amazonian invasion.

"This injury, they [the Amazons] avenged by invading Attica—an undertaking neither 'trifling or feminine.' They penetrated even into Athens itself, where the final battle, hard fought, and at one time doubtful, by which Theseus crushed them. was fought in the very heart of the city. Attic antiquaries confidently pointed out the exact position of the two contending armies: the left wing of the Amazons rested upon the spot occupied by the commemorative monument of the Amazoneion; the right wing touched the Pnyx, the place in which the public assemblages of the Athenian democracy were held. The details and fluctuations of the combat, as well as the final triumph and consequent truce, were recounted by these authors, with as complete faith, and as much circumstantiality as those of the battle of Platæa by Herodotus. No portion of the ante-historical epic appears to have been more deeply worked into the national mind of Greece than this invasion and defeat of the Amazons. It was not only a constant theme of the logographers, but was also constantly appealed to by the popular orators along with Marathon and Salamis, among those antique exploits of which their fellow-citizens might be justly proud. It formed a part of the retrospective faith of Herodotus, Lysias, Plato, and Isokrates, and the exact date of the event was settled by the chronologists."—*Grote's Greece.*

An orthodox friend of F. W. Newman admitted that Genesis was made up of older writings, "and regarded it as a high recommendation of the book that it was conscientiously made out of pre-existing materials, and was not a fancy that came from the brain of Moses."

"It is probable it [the Jewish canon] comprehended all the remains of the ancient literature of the nation"—*Norton.*

"I have long thought that the greater part of the book of *Daniel* is most certainly a very late work, of the time of the Maccabees; and the pretended prophecy of the Kings of Greece and Persia, and of the North and South, is mere history, like the poetical prophecies in Virgil and elsewhere. In fact, you can distinctly trace the date when it was written, because the events up to that date are given with historical minuteness, totally unlike the character of real prophecy, and beyond that date all is imaginary." *Arnold.*

The Epistle of Paul to the *Hebrews* was looked upon with great doubt for a long time by the early churches, and was not universally received as genuine till about 300 A. D. De Wette thinks it spurious. He says that the style is entirely different from that of

Digitized by Google

the majority of the Epistles, admitted to be genuine, being purer Greek, and more elegant. The writer was apparently ignorant of the Old Testament in Hebrew, and there are several passages which Paul would scarcely have written, if, indeed, he would have written at all to a Jewish congregation, where other apostles were the leaders.

Sir Henry Rawlinson says that *Job* was not written till after the Assyrian Captivity. His reasons are, that Bildad is a Persian name, and that the tribe to which Job's friends belonged are not found in the neighborhood of Uz till towards the Captivity. *Eclectic Review. Feb.*, 1857.

"The books of the *Kings* are more worthy of credit than the books of the *Chronicles*. * * * Job spake not therefore as it stands written in his book, but hath had such cogitations. It is a sheer allegory. It is probable that Solomon made and wrote this book. * * This book (*Ecclesiastes*) ought to have been more full; there is too much broken matter in it; it has neither boots nor spurs; but rides only in socks, as I myself when in the cloister. Solomon, therefore, hath not written this book, which had been made in the days of the Maccabees by Sirach. It is like a *Talmud*, compiled from many books, perhaps in Egypt, at the desire of King Ptolemy Euergetes. So, also, have the *Proverbs* of Solomon been collected by others. * * * The book of *Esther* I toss into the Elbe. * * * I am so an enemy to the book of *Esther*, that I would it did not exist; for it Judaizes too much, and hath in it a great deal of heathenish naughtiness. Isaiah hath borrowed his art and knowledge from the *Psalter*. * * * The history of *Jonah* is so monstrous that it is absolutely incredible. * * * That the Epistle to the *Hebrews* is not by St. Paul, nor by any apostle at all, is shown by Chap. II. 3. It was written by an exceedingly learned man, a disciple of the Apostles. It should be no stumbling block, if there should be found in it a mixture of wood, straw, hay. The Epistle of *James* I account the writing of no Apostle. It is an epistle of straw. * * * The Epistle of *Jude* is a copy of *St. Peter's*, and altogether, has stories which have no place in Scripture. * * * In the *Revelations* of St. John much is wanting to let me deem it Scriptural. I can discover no trace that it is established by the spirit." *Luther.*

"The passage concerning Jesus Christ, which was inserted into the text of *Josephus*, between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius, may furnish an example of no vulgar forgery. The accomplishment of the prophecies, the virtues, miracles, and resurrection of Jesus are distinctly related."—*Gibbon. Decline and Fall, Chap. XVI., Note 36. Not contradicted by Milman or Guizot.*

Digitized by Google

Christian Mysteries Ch. XXIII.

'The more contrary to reason the divine mystery, so much the more must it be believed for the glory of God." *Bacon.*

"The road to Hell is paved with good intentions."

"If believing too little or too much is so fatal to mankind, what will become of us all?"—*John Adams.*

"He who would not rather be damned than escape through the sufferings of innocence and sanctity, is so far from the qualifications of a saint, that he has not even the magnanimity of Milton's fiends." —*Rev. James Martineau.*

"Nothing appears so revolting to our reason as to say that the transgression of the first man should impart guilt to those, who, from their extreme distance from the source of the evil, seem incapable of such a participation. This transmission seems to us not only unnatural but unjust. For what can be more repugnant to the rules of our despicable justice than to condemn eternally an infant, yet irresponsible, for an offence, in which he appears to have so little share, that it was committed six thousand years before he came into existence?" *Pascal.*

A Negro's Description of the First Sin.

"My tex', bruderen and sisteren, will be foun' in the fus' chapter ob Ginesis, and de twenty-seben verse, 'So de Lor' make man just like Hese'f.' Now my bruderen, you see dat in the beginnin' of the world de Lor' make Adam. I tole you *how* he make him; He make 'im out ob clay, and he sot 'im on a board, an' he look at him, an' he say, 'Furs-rate;' an' when he got dry, he breve in 'im de breff of life. He put him in de garden of Eden, and he sot 'im in one corner of de lot, an' he tole him to eat all de apples, 'ceptin' dem in de middle ob de orchard: dem he wanted for winter apples. Byme-by Adam, he got lonesome. So, de Lor' make Ebe. I tole you how he make her. He gib Adam lodlom, till he got sound 'sleep; den he gouge a rib out he side, an make Ebe; an' he set Ebe in de corner ob de garden, an' he tole her to eat all de apples, 'ceptin' dem in de middle ob de orchard; dem he want for winter apples. One day de Lor' go out a bisitin'; de debble come along; he dress hissel in de skin ob de snake, and he find Ebe; an' he tole her, 'Ebe! why for you no eat de apple in de middle ob de orchard?' Ebe say, 'Dem me Lor's winter apples.' But de debble say, 'I tole you for to eat dem, case deys de best apples in de orchard.' So Ebe eat de apple, an' gib Adam a bite; an' de debble go away. Byme-by de Lor' come home, an' he miss de winter apples, an' he call, 'Adam!' you Adam!' Adam he lay low; so de Lor' call again, 'You Adam!' Adam say, 'Hea! Lor';' and de Lor' say,

Digitized by Google

'Who stole de winter apples?' Adam tole him he don't know—Ebe, he expec'! So de Lor' call 'Ebe!' Ebe she lay low: de Lor' call again, 'You Ebe!' Ebe say, 'Hea, Lor'.' De Lor' say, 'Who stole de winter apples!' Ebe tole him she don't know; Adam she expec'! So de Lor' cotch em bofe, and he trow dem ober de fence, an' he tole 'em, 'Go, work for your libin'!"—*Knickerbocker.*

Virginity of Mary.

Christians generally not only insist that Mary was a virgin after conceiving and giving birth to Jesus, but all her life. They shut their eyes when they come to the following texts:—

Joseph "knew her [Mary] not till she had brought forth her *first-born* son." *Mat. I.* 25.

"And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their Synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said 'Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his *brethren* [brothers] James, and Joses, and Simon and Judas?'" *Mat. XIII.* 54, 55.

"Is not this the carpenter the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judah and of Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" *Mark VI.* 3.

"And she [Mary] brought forth her *first-born* son." *Luke II.* 7.

"Then came his mother and brethren and could not come at him for the press" [crowd]. *Luke VIII.* 19.

"For neither did his brethren [brothers] believe in him." *John VII.* 5.

"He went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren." *John II.* 12.

"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." *Acts II.* 14.

"Other of the Apostles saw I [Paul] none, save James the Lord's brother." *Gal. I.* 19.

The Evils of Christianity.—Ch. XXIV.

"Without Jesus Christ the world could not continue to exist. It must either be destroyed or become a hell." *Pascal.*

"No inquirer can fix a direct and clearsighted gaze towards truth who is casting side glances all the while on the prospects of his soul." *Harriet Martineau.*

"Liberalism will never prevail with those who, in politics, are attached to monarchy, and, in religion, to Christianity." *Schlegel.*

"The result [of the stubborn attempt of the Christian churches

Digitized by Google

to adhere to their superannuated creed and gospel] is that utter divorce between practice and profession which has made the entire life of modern England [and America] a frightful lie." *J. A. Froude.*

"I say with Plato, that we are most wantonly taking advantage of a most sacred time to do our children the most cruel injury. I see round me the same results which he so much deplored, and the same causes leading to them; the world living in practical atheism, the clergy frozen and formal; and men like Markham Sunderland [the hero of *the Nemesis of Faith*] who will not be frightened into forfeiting their humanity, heart-broken and dying of despair." *Froude. Nemesis of Faith.*

"I look back with a kind of horror, as well as deep pity, on myself, on the days when I thought it my duty to cultivate (against nature) an anxious solicitude about my own salvation—my own future spiritual welfare." *Harriet Martineau.*

"The general tone of the Bible is that reproof is administered and retribution exacted less on behalf of absolute truth than of divine egotism—less for the infringement of right than for the personal affront." *Revelation its own Nemesis.*

"The Christian priests and ministers are generally conservatives of evil, and hostile to political and social reform, as diverting man's energies from eternity."

"In Calvanism, the doctrine of unconditional election forms a distinguishing feature, and may be called the keystone of the theological arch. All men by birth are in a state of spiritual ruin. Out of this ruin God chose from eternity a certain number. In his own good time he touches them by his omnipotent grace, which they have no power to resist, and calls them to salvation. He passes over the rest, and leaves them reprobate. The selected ones he preserves in a state of grace, and they cannot fall out of it. Original and Total Ruin, Election, Reprobation, Effectual Calling, and Final Perseverance are the five acts in the great drama that winds up the destinies of humanity. The elect were not chosen for any foreseen good in them, for there was none, and the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice does not extend to the race, but is only commensurate with the elected ones." *Christian Examiner* (*Boston*) *Jan.* 1857.

"Christianity has mitigated the conduct of war, and the treatment of captives. It has softened the administration of despotic, or nominally despotic governments. It has abolished polygamy. It has restrained the licentiousness of divorces. It has put an end to the exposure of children, and the immolation of slaves. It has suppressed the combats of gladiators, and the impurities of religious rites. It has banished, if not unnatural vices, at least the toleration of them. It has greatly meliorated the condition of the laboring

Digitized by Google

part, that is to say, of the mass of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest. In all countries in which it is professed, it has produced numerous establishments for the relief of sickness and poverty; and in some a regular and general provision by law. It has triumphed over the slavery established in the Roman Empire; it is contending, and I trust, will one day prevail against the worst slavery of the West Indies." *Paley.*

"The Sophists [in Greece] tried to widen the superficial extent of knowledge rather than to secure its foundations, and the attempt to popularize information involved the usual consequences of lowering its dignity. This loose intellectual system had a direct tendency to countenance immorality. Skepticism corrupted morals as well as metaphysics: good and evil were treated as matters of mere conventional estimation, that is, as having, like truth, only a relative existence; and the virtues enumerated as appropriate to different relations—the statesman, husband, father, and master,—became expedients of policy, instead of obligations of conscience. Confusion of thought led to irregular action; and to the want of fixed principles must be, in part, ascribed the laxity and wide-spread social disorganization described by Thucydides, the disregard of domestic, civil and religious obligation, the prostitution of the name of virtue to successful selfishness, extending even to the arbitrary alteration of the received meaning of words to disguise the open infamy of prevailing vices. The later Sophists, Critias, Polus, and Callicles, carried the subtleties of their principles to an extreme, probably as unforeseen as shameless, when, adopting the unscrupulous license of Greek faction, they openly proclaim happiness to consist in pleasure and success, might to be right, law a device of the weak to limit the natural right of the strong, and religion a political trick for coercing the ignorant. These consequences were, however, inevitably involved in the Sophistical system; and they as inevitably provoked a reaction. The reaction was two-fold. Some, as Aristophanes, would have proscribed philosophy altogether as being in its actual state both useless in itself, and tending to subvert the old morality and faith; others hoped to find a remedy in that which inflicted the wound, and to revive religion and morals by regenerating philosophy."—*R. W. Mackay. Progress of the Intellect. IV.* 17.

The above passage is full of what I call "Infidelity"—distrust of, or disbelief in humanity. How would Mr. Mackay secure the foundations of knowledge better than by widening its superficial extent in universal education? Does knowledge lose its dignity by being popularized? Does skepticism corrupt metaphysics? Is the diffusion of information among the people the establishment of a "loose intellectual system", which countenances immorality? What are the foundations of knowledge, and how are they to be secured?

Digitized by Google

"The mischief is, that in matters of religion men demand that he who has a mature and well-proportioned piety should always go back to the rude helps of his boyhood, to the A–B–C of religion, and the nursery books of piety. He is not bid to take his power of piety, and apply that to the common works of life. The Newton of piety is sent back to the dame-school of religion, and told to keep counting his fingers, otherwise there is no health in him, and all piety is wiped out of his consciousness, and he hates God, and God hates him. He must study the anicular lines on the school-dame's slate, not the diagrams of God writ on the heaven in points of fire. We are told, that what once thus helped to form a religious character, must be continually resorted to, and become the permanent form thereof.

"This notion is exceedingly pernicious. It wastes the practical power of piety by directing it from its natural work; it keeps the steam-engine always fanning and blowing itself, perpetually firing itself up, while it turns no wheels but its own, and does no work but feed and fire itself. This constant firing up of one's self, is looked on as the natural work and only form of piety. Ask any popular minister in one of the predominant sects, for the man most marked for piety, and he will not show you the men, with the power of business, who do the work of life,—the upright mechanic, merchant or farmer; not the men with the power of thought, of justice or of love; not him whose whole life is one great act of fourfold piety. No, he will show you some men who are always a-dawdling over their souls, going back to the baby-jumpers and nursery-rhymes of their early days, and everlastingly coming to the church to fire themselves up, calling themselves 'miserable offenders', and saying, 'Save us, Good Lord.' If a man thinks himself a miserable offender, let him away with the offense, and be done with the complaint at once and forever. * *

"Not only do men waste the practical power of piety, but they cease to get more. To feed on baby's food, to be dandled in mother's arms,—to play with the boy's playthings, to learn boy's lessons, and be amused with boy's stories,—this helps the boy, but hinders the man. Long ago, we got from these helps all that was in them. To stay longer, is waste of time. * * What, if you kept the boy over his nursery rhymes forever, or tried to make the man grown believe that they contained the finest poetry in the world, that the giant stories, and the fairy tales therein, were all true; what effect would it have on his mind? Suppose, you told him, that the proof of his manhood consisted in his fondness for little boys' playthings, and the little story-books and the little games of little children, and kept him securely fastened to the apron-strings of the school-dame; suppose you could make him believe so! You must make him a fool first. What would work so bad in intellectual affairs, works quite as ill in the matter of piety.

The story of the flood has strangled a world of souls. The miracles of the New Testament no longer heal, but hurt mankind." —*Theodore Parker. Sermon on Fourfold Form of Piety.*

"No man is really happy, rational, virtuous, amiable, but the true Christian." *Pascal.*

"I prefer ancient Rome with all its multitude of religions to modern Rome and consider the latter as godless compared with the former." *Schleiermacher.*

"In behalf of Christianity, the foolishest teaching becomes acceptable; the foulest doctrines, the grossest conduct, crimes that like the fabled banquet of Thyestes, might make the sun sicken at the sight and turn back affrighted in his course—these things are counted as beautiful, superior to reason, acceptable to God. The wicked man may bless his brother in crime, the unrighteous blast the holy with his curse, and devotees shall shout, 'Amen,' to both the blessing and the ban." *Parker.*

Sydney Smith makes the following quotation from the journal of a Methodist;

"1794, Jan. 26, Lord's day. Found much pleasure in reading Edward's sermon on the Justice of God in the damnation of sinners."

"The Christians cannot trust God unless they have his bond in black and white, given under oath and attested by witnesses." *Parker.*

"The popular religion is hostile to man: tells us he is an outcast: not a child of God but a spurious issue of the Devil. He must not even pray in his own name. His duty is an impossible thing. No man can do it. He deserves nothing but damnation. Theology tells him that is all he is sure of." *Parker.*

Jesus asks for "the belief of all men, but cares not on what ground they believe." *F. W. Newman.*

"He, who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by his sect better than Christianity and end in loving himself better than all." *Coleridge.*

The popular theology "makes God dark and awful; a judge not a protector; a king not a father; jealous, selfish, vindictive. He is the Draco of the universe; the author of sin, and its unforgiving avenger." *Parker.*

"Orthodox Christianity is unmanly and sneaking. It dares not look reason in the face, but creeps behind tradition and only quotes. It has nothing new and living to say. To hear it talk, one would think God was dead or at best asleep." *Parker.*

"A ready-made creed is the Paradise of the Christian's lazy dreams. A string of authoritative dogmatic propositions comprises

Digitized by Google

the whole mental wealth which they desire. The volume of nature, the volume of history, the volume of life appal and terrify them." *Greg.*

"I know that there are those who will construe what they will call my lenity towards unbelief into treachery towards Christianity. There are those who think that unless skepticism be ranked among the worst crimes, and the infidel marked out for abhorence and dread, the multitude of men will lose their hold on the Gospel. An opinion more discreditable to Christianity cannot easily be advanced by its friends. It virtually admits that the proofs of our religion, unless examined under the influence of terror, cannot work conviction; that the gospel cannot be left, like other subjects, to the calm and unbiased judgment of mankind. I discover a distrust of Christianity, with which I have no sympathy. And here I would remark, that the worst abuses of our religion have sprung from this cowardly want of confidence in its power. Its friends have feared that it could not stand without a variety of artificial buttresses. They have imagined that men must now be bribed into faith by annexing to it temporal privileges, now driven into it by menaces and inquisitions, now attracted by gorgeous forms, now awed by mysteries and superstitions; in a word that the multitude must be imposed upon, or the religion will fall. I have no such distrust of Christianity; I believe in its invincible powers. It is founded in our nature. It meets our deepest wants. Its proofs as well as principles are adapted to the common understandings of men, and need not to be aided by appeals to fear or any other passion, which would discourage inquiry or disturb the judgment. I fear nothing for Christianity if left to speak in its own tones, to approach men, with its unveiled, benignant countenance. I do fear much from the weapons of policy and intimidation, which are framed to uphold the imagined weakness of Christian truth."—*W. E.. Channing.*

Emerson complains that the Gospels dwell with "noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus."

"Think not that I am about to have recourse to those common means of representing to you, how necessary religion is to support social order and political justice, and to come to the help of the limited powers and short sight of humanity with warnings, that there is an all-seeing eye and an omnipotent power. I shall not argue for Religion by endeavoring to show you how true a friend, and how valuable a support she may be to morality, by harmonizing the inward struggles of man, and strengthening him in his good purposes with her holy feelings and glorious anticipations. Many of those who call themselves the best friends and the most zealous defenders of religion speak in this style; but I shall not decide which of the parties suggested in such language is the most deserving of contempt—the justice and morality which are represented as needing

Digitized by Google

support—the religion which is to furnish the support—or they to whom such arguments are used." *Schleiermacher. Ueber die Religion.*

Physiology vs. a Future State.—Ch. XXV.

Christians have always endeavored to justify themselves in claiming immortality for men, while they deny it to brutes, by asserting that the mental powers of the latter are instinctive, while those of the former are reasoning. That the minds of brutes are different in some important and singular particulars from those of men is not to be denied: but it has not been shewn that reason is more worthy of immortality than instinct. Brougham asserts that the bee makes his cell on that model which the highest mathemathicians have declared to be the best of all possible forms, for strength and roominess; and some bugs cut leaves for the purpose of sewing up their eggs in such forms as, if first made by a man, would be considered proof positive of a very high scientific knowledge. On this point, I can give no more light than is contained in the subjoined extracts.

Lord Brougham in his *Dialogues on Instinct*, gives the following notes, in all seriousness; and Brodie lends credit to them;—

"When a sow farrows, the pigs are expelled with some force, and to a little distance, by the action of the uterus and abdominal muscles. Each pig instantly runs up to one of the teats, which he ever after regards as his own peculiar property: and when more pigs than teats are produced, the latter ones run to the tails of some of the others, and suck till they die of inanition.

"Mr. Davy, in his account of Ceylon, mentions a remarkable instinct of the alligator. He saw an egg in the sand just ready to crack, and broke it with his stick. The animal came out and made at once for the river. He held his stick before it, and immediately the reptile put itself in a posture of defence, as an adult alligator would have done in like circumstances."

"On dissecting a goat great with young, I found a brisk embryon, and having detached it from the matrix, and snatched it away before it saw its dam, I brought it into a room where there were many vessels, some filled with wine, others with oil, some with honey, others with milk or some other liquor, and in others there were grain and fruits. We first observed the young animal get upon its feet and walk; then it shook itself, and afterwards scratched its side with one of its feet; then we saw it smelling to every one of these things that were set in the room, and when it had smelt to them all, it drank up the milk." *Galen as quoted in Dr. Herbert Mayo's Physiology.*

"A fly-catcher, for instance, just come out of its shell, has been seen to peck at an insect, with an aim as perfect as if it had been

engaged all its life [during a long life] in learning its art." *Carpenter.*

"A monkey, tied to a stake, was robbed by the Johnny-Crows (in the West Indies) of his food, and he conceived the following plan of punishing the thieves. He feigned death, and lay perfectly motionless on the ground, near to his stake. The birds approached by degrees, and got near enough to steal his food, which he allowed them to do. This he repeated several times, till they became so bold as to come within the reach of his claws. He calculated his distance, and laid hold of one of them. Death was not his plan of punishment; he was more refined in his cruelty. He plucked every feather out of the bird, and then let him go and show himself to his companions. He made a man of him, according to the ancient definition of a 'biped without feathers.'" *Illustrations of Instinct.*

"Jack, as he was called, seeing his master and some companions drinking, with those imitative powers for which his species is remarkable, finding half a glass of whiskey left, took it up and drank it off. It flew, of course, to his head. Amid their loud roars of laughter, he began to skip, hop, and dance. Jack was drunk. Next day, when they went with the intention of repeating the fun, to take the poor monkey from his box, he was not to be seen. Looking inside, there he lay, crouching in a corner. 'Come out!' said his master. Afraid to disobey, he came walking on three legs —the fore-paw that was laid on his forehead, saying, as plain as words could do, that he had a headache.

"Having been left some days to get well, and resume his gaiety, they at length carried him off to the old scene of revel. On entering, he eyed the glasses with manifest terror, skulking behind the chair; and on his master ordering him to drink, he bolted, and he was on the house-top in a twinkling. They called him down. He would not come. His master shook the whip at him. Jack, astride on the ridge-pole, grinned defiance. A gun, of which he was always much afraid, was pointed at this disciple of temperance; he ducked his head, and slipped over to the back of the house; upon which, seeing his predicament, and less afraid apparently of the fire than the fire-water, the monkey leaped at a bound on the chimney-top, and getting down into a flue, held on by his fore-paws. He would rather be singed than drink. He triumphed, and although his master kept him for twelve years after that, he never could persuade the monkey to taste another drop of whiskey." *Dr. Guthrie.*

Vigan on Reason in Animals.

"That animals are perfectly capable of following out a process of original ratiocination, I have witnessed numerous examples. I once offered an apple to an elephant, and let it drop the moment he was about to seize it; it rolled out of his reach. He waited a moment to see if I would pick it up, and being disappointed in this

Digitized by Google

expectation, set himself to blow violently against the opposite wall, and the recoil forced the apple to his feet. Now, this was a trick which it was impossible that any one could have taught him, and it must have arisen from a process of reflection perfectly similar to that which takes place in the human mind. * * * * * * *

"I noticed, a short time ago, the following example of insect reasoning. A large spider established himself in a recess formed by a shed and a projection of the house, and taking his long line diagonally from a corner of the house to the eaves of a small building which was at the bottom of the recess, he then filled up the triangular space with a large and well-defined circular web. I noticed with admiration, during the day, his wonderful skill, the accuracy of his lines, and the equality of the spaces, and observed how carefully he pushed down his line, and fastened it securely with his two hind-feet to each radius in succession. When he had finished about two-thirds of his concentric circles, or rather of his helix, he went to the centre and swallowed a quantity of white tenacious mucus, which he had deposited there at the commencement, having apparently spun himself out. He then proceeded to complete his work, which, having accomplished, and thus reduced himself to very small dimensions, he hung himself up by the hind-legs, and I presume went to sleep. The slightest touch of a fly, however, was sufficient to make him start out; and having wrapped up a few of them in his toils, and well stocked his larder, he again betook himself to repose.

"In the meantime one of the smaller spiders, considering that the diagonal line of his neighbor was strong enough to bear two webs, began to attach his lines to it, and having done so in four or five places, proceeded to spin his own web. My older friend tolerated the intrusion very patiently, and acquiesced in the use his neighbor was making of a 'party wall', though against *spider law*. By-and-by the new comer, having partly fitted up his own trap, and finding that no flies came into it, observing, I presume, the ample supply of food in his neighbor's premises, advanced along one of his own lines, seemingly for the purpose of open burglary. My old friend had tolerated much, but this was a degree of impudence for which he was not prepared, and which he determined to punish forthwith. He proceeded to the centre of his web, and giving the whole framework a violent shake, hoped to shake the intruder down to the ground. He did no more, however, than turn him round on the line, where he hung very patiently till the shaking ceased, and then resumed his march towards his neighbor's territory. Again and again, and with increasing violence, did the large spider shake his web,—it was all in vain: there [illegible] the enemy advancing, and though so small as to be easily ov[illegible] should he reach the mainland, the insult was intolerable. [illegible]ing round, my elder friend saw that during the violent [illegible] had broken two or three of his own short lines, and [illegible]

Digitized by Google

ponent and set himself to work, to mend them. Having completed the task to his perfect satisfaction, he returned to the burglar. The latter. when he came near, saw at once that he had been rash in provoking such an enemy, and hurried back to his own web. When his opponent saw him on his thin line, on his retreat, he again set himself to his shaking fit, and make the most violent efforts to throw him down; it was all in vain, however, and he got safe home. After a moment's consideration, the other seemed to think that so audacious an attempt ought to be condignly punished, and he determined to retort the invasion. The thin lines of his diminutive antagonist, however, did not afford a sufficient support for his heavy bulk, and as he advanced he carefully spun a strengthener upon the other's tenuous cord. It was now the little one's turn to shake off the intruder, and twice did he break the thin part of the line, and leave his enemy dangling. At last the latter gave up the attempt, and went back to the centre of his own web, after *carefully detaching every one of the lines* which his neighbor had had the impudence to fasten to the long diagonal.

"If this be not a process of reasoning, then I cannot understand the meaning of the word. Here was calculation of means to an end. and change of plan in consequence of unexpected obstacles. Had the human race spun webs, and dared one another to single combat, I do not see how they could have shown more judgment and skill in the attack and defence. As I patiently watched the spiders, I could not but put words into their mouths, and fancy the conversation, although words could scarcely have added any force or distinctness to the pantomime I witnessed. The strengthening of his own lines in order to bear the shaking, and the doubling of his neighbor's lines, while advancing to punish him, were really the strategy of an acute general; and I think I have seen more than one biped, bearing the title, who was scarcely possessed of an equal amount of the power of ratiocination."—*Duality of the Mind.*

"One sight of a pigeon paying his addresses would be sufficient to unsettle in our minds all those proud conclusions which we draw respecting the difference between reason and instinct. If this is mere instinct. as distinguished from reason, if a bird follow another up and down by a simple mechanical impulse, giving himself all the airs and graces imaginable, exciting as many in his mistress, and uttering every moment articulate sounds, which we are no more bound to suppose deficient in meaning than a pigeon would be warranted in supposing the same of our speech, then reason itself may be no more than a mere mechanical impulse. It has nothing better to show for it." *Leigh Hunt.*

"You can't catch an *old* bird with chaff."

Digitized by Google

"Notwithstanding the evidences of rationality which many of the lower animals present, and the manifestations which they display of emotions that are similar to own, there is no ground to believe that they have any of that controlling power over their psychical operations which *we* possess; on the contrary, all observation seems to lead to the conclusion that they are under the complete domination of the ideas and opinions by which they are for the time possessed, and have no power either of repressing these by a forcible act of the will, or of turning the attention by a like voluntary effort into another channel. In this respect, then, their condition resembles that of the dreamer, the somnambule, or the insane patient, in all of whom the voluntary control is suspended, and who (when their minds are susceptible of external impressions) may be so played upon by the suggestion of ideas that any respondent action, consistent with the habitual mental state of the individual, may be evoked by an appropriate stimulus."—*Carpenter.—Hum. Phys.*, § 684.

"It seems evident that animals, as well as men, learn many things from experience, and infer that the same events will always follow from the same causes. By this principle, they become acquainted with the more obvious properties of external objects, and, gradually, from their birth, treasure up a knowledge of the nature of fire, water, earth, stones, heights, depths, etc., and of the effects which result from their operations. The ignorance and inexperience of the young are here plainly distinguishable from the cunning and sagacity of the old, who have learned by long observation, to avoid what hurt them, and to pursue whatever gave ease or pleasure. A horse, that has been accustomed to the field, becomes acquainted with the proper height which he can leap, and will never attempt what exceeds his force or ability. An old greyhound will trust the more fatiguing part of the chase to the younger, and will place himself so as to meet the hare in her doubles; nor are the conjectures which he forms on this occasion, founded on anything but his observation and experience.

"This is still more evident from the effects of discipline and education on animals, who, by the proper application of rewards and punishments, may be taught any course of action, the most contrary to their natural instincts and propensities. * * * In all these cases, we may observe that the animal infers some fact beyond what immediately strikes his senses; and this inference is altogether founded on past experience, while the creature expects from the present object the same consequences which it has always found in its observation, to result from similar objects."—*Hume.*

"For several years past, we have had a young orang-outang in the Jardin des Plantes. I have been enabled to study him, and he has often surprised me by his intelligence. He recalled to mind the observations, made by Buffon on an orang-outang which he had

Digitized by Google

observed. I have seen this animal present his hand to lead away the persons who had come to visit him, promenade gravely with them and as if for company: I have seen him sit down at the table, unfold his napkin, wipe his lips, use a fork and spoon to convey food to his mouth, pour out his drink into a glass, touch it to the glasses of others when invited, go and take a cup and saucer, place them on the table, put in sugar, pour out tea, allow it to cool for drinking, and all this without any other instigation than the signs or words of his master, and often of his own motion. He never injured any one, approached persons with circumspection, and presented himself as if to demand caresses. Our young orang-outang did all these things. He was very gentle, loved caresses greatly, particularly those of little children; played with them, sought to imitate everything that was done before him, &c.

"He understood very well how to take the key of the chamber where it had been placed, insert it in the lock, and open the door. This key was sometimes put on the mantle-piece, and then he raised himself to get it with the aid of a cord which hung from the ceiling. A knot was made in the cord to shorten it, but he immediately untied it. Like the orang-outang of Buffon, he was not impatient, and petulant like other monkeys: his air was sad, his walk grave, his movements measured.

"I went one day to visit him with an illustrious old man, a keen and profound observer. His dress slightly singular, his slow and feeble walk, and his bent figure fixed the attention of the young animal from the moment of our arrival. He lent himself to everything demanded of him, but kept his eye constantly fixed upon his venerable visitor. We were about to retire when he approached the stranger, took the cane with a mild manner but a malicious purpose, and leaning upon it, and bending his back, he began to walk slowly about the room imitating the attitude and gait of my old friend. He then returned the stick of his own accord, and we left him fully satisfied that he was not without a faculty of observation." *Flourens.*

"There is hardly a mechanical pursuit in which insects do not excel. They are excellent weavers, house-builders, architects. They make diving-bells, bore galleries, raise vaults, construct bridges. They line their houses with tapestry, clean them, ventilate them, and close them with admirably-fitted swing-doors. They build and store warehouses, construct traps in the greatest variety, hunt skilfully, rob and plunder. They poison, sabre and strangle their enemies. They have social laws, a common language, division of labor, and gradations of rank. They maintain armies, go to war, send out scouts, appoint sentinels, carry off provisions, keep slaves and tend domestic animals." *Quoted as correct in Brodie's Mind and Matter, Ch. V*

Digitized by Google

"It would seem that in the proportion which their instincts and intelligence bear to each other, that the difference between the mind of man and that of other animals, chiefly consists. Reasoning is not peculiar to the former, nor instinct to the latter." *Brodie. Mind and Matter. Ch. V.*

A drunken man don't remember, when sober, what he did when drunk. A young infant has no memory.

"Ants have a kind of language [communicated] by means of their feelers or antennæ; and every day's exoerience seems to show this in other animals." *Brougham.*

"Respecting the elephant, extraordinary accounts are told by military men who were in the Burmese war. They relate that when any extraordinary task is to be performed by them, some favorite dainty is held up before hand, and the sagacious animal, comprehending the promise of reward thus implied, exerts himself to earn it. This comes to the principle of barter, as near as mav be." *Same.*

The majority of the physiological writers of the present day who wish to be understood as favoring the immortality of the soul, argue that the soul is distinct from the mind, the latter being admitted to be a mere function of the brain. Among those who take this ground are Wigan (*Duality of the Mind*), Millingen (*Mind and Matter*), Brigham (*Mental Excitement and Cultivation*), and J. J. G. Wilkinson, (*The Human Body and its connection with Man.*)

Wear of Brain.

"Like all other tissues actively concerned in the vital operations, Nervous matter is subject to *waste* or *disintegration*, which bears an exact proportion to the activity of its operations—or, in other words, that every act of the Nervous system involves the death and decay of a certain amount of Nervous matter, the replacement of which will be requisite in order to maintain the system in a state fit for action. * * There are certain parts of the Nervous system, particularly those which put in action the respiratory muscles which are in a state of unceasing though moderate, activity; and in these, the constant nutrition is sufficient to repair the effects of the constant decay. But those parts, which operate in a more powerful and energetic manner, and which therefore waste more rapidly when in action, need a season of rest for their reparation. Thus, a sense of fatigue is experienced, when the mind has been long acting through its instrument, the brain, indicating the necessity of rest and reparation. And when *sleep*, or cessation of the cerebral functions, comes on, the process of nutrition takes place with unchecked energy, counterbalances the results of the previous waste, and prepares the organ for a renewal of its activity. In the healthy state of the body, when the exertion of the nervous system by day

Digitized by Google

does not exceed that, which the repose of the night may compensate, it is maintained in a condition which fits it for constant moderate exercise; but unusual demands upon its powers—whether by the long continued and severe exercise of the intellect, by excitement of the emotions, or by combination of both in that state of *anxiety* which the circumstances of man's condition so frequently induce—produce an unusual waste, which requires, for a complete restoration of its powers, a prolonged repose.

"There can be no doubt that (from causes which are unknown,) the amount of sleep required by different persons, for the maintenance of a healthy condition of the nervous system, varies considerably; some being able to dispense with it, to a degree which would be exceedingly injurious to others of no greater mental activity. Where a prolonged exertion of the mind has been made, and the natural tendency to sleep has been habitually resisted by a strong effort of the will, injurious results are sure to follow. The bodily health breaks down and too frequently the mind itself is permanently enfeebled. It is obvious that the nutrition of the nervous system becomes completely deranged; and that the tissue is no longer formed, in the manner requisite for the discharge of its healthy functions.

"As the amount of muscular tissue that has undergone disintegration is represented, (other things being equal,) by the quantity of urea in the urine, so do we find that an unusual waste of the *nervous* matter is indicated by an increase in the amount of *phosphatic* deposits. No others of the soft issues contain any large proportion of phosphorus; and the marked increase in these deposits, which has been continually observed to accompany long-continued *wear* of mind, whether by intellectual exertion or by anxiety, can scarcely be set down to any other cause. The most satisfactory proof is to be found in cases in which there is a periodical demand upon the mental powers; as, for example, among clergymen, in the preparation for and discharge of their Sunday duties. This is found to be almost invariably followed by the appearance of a large quantity of the phosphates in the urine. And in cases in which constant and severe intellectual exertion has impaired the nutrition of the brain, and has constantly weakened the mental power, it is found that any premature attempt to renew the activity of its exercise, causes the reappearance of the excessive phosphatic discharge, which indicates an undue waste of nervous matter."—*Carpenter. Elements of Physiology.*

From Vogt's Physiology.

"But it was always principally theology that wished to speak a word to obstruct the progress of the natural sciences, which planted these [orthodox, anti-scientific] representations in the theory of human development, and sought to keep them there. The soul was indeed given to the priest as his domain; he was to care for it, not only while it was in the body, but also after it should have left

Digitized by Google

its earthly dwelling; and to prevent their subject from escaping, the priests asserted, in the face of all evidence, the existence of an immaterial mind which would live after death independently of the body.

"It is not necessary to go into a lengthy essay to show the manner in which sound philosophy views this question. There are only two points of observation. Either the function of every organ of an animated body is an immaterial being which only makes use of the organ; or the function is a property of the matter. In the latter case the intellectual faculties are only functions of the brain, develop themselves with it, and expire with it. The soul, therefore, does not take possession of the fœtus, as the evil spirit was represented to enter lunatics, but is a product of the development of the brain, as the muscular power is a product of the development of the muscles."—*Vogt's Physiologische Briefe.*

The same author says elsewhere:

"Physiology breaks the support of the views of theologians in regard to the soul, by declaring that there are no active powers in man, except the material organs and their functions, and that the latter must die with the former. We have seen that we can destroy the intellectual faculties by injuring the brain. By the observation of the development of the embryo, we can easily convince ourselves that the mental powers grow as the brain is gradually developed. The fœtus makes no manifestations of thought or consciousness, but its movements evince the capability of reflex action and the susceptibility to nervous influence. Only after birth does the child begin to think, and only after birth does its brain acquire the material development of which it is capable. With the course of life, the mind changes, and it ceases to exist with the death of the organ.

"Physiology declares herself positively and clearly against any individual immortality, and against all those representations which connect themselves with the separate existence of a soul. She is not only entitled to speak a word on this subject, but it is her duty, and physiologists are justly liable to reproach for not having sooner raised their voices to point out the only true method of solving the problem of the soul."

"I see no reason to believe, that the soul thinks before the senses have furnished it with ideas to think on."—*Locke.*

"All the operations of the mind are originally dependent upon the reception of sensations. If it were possible for a human being to come into the world, with a brain perfectly prepared to be the instrument of psychical operations, but, with all the inlets to sensation closed, we have every reason to believe that the mind would remain dormant, like a seed buried deep in the earth. The attentive study of cases in which there is a congenital deficiency of one or more sensations, makes it evident that the mind is utterly

Digitized by Google

incapable of forming any definite ideas in regard to those properties of objects, of which those particular sensations are adapted to take cognizance. Thus the man who is born blind, can form no conception of color: nor the congenitally deaf, of musical tones. And in those lamentable cases, in which the sense of touch is the only one through which ideas can be introduced, it is evident that the mental operations must remain of the simplest and most limited character, if the utmost attention be given by a judicious instructor, to the development of the intellectual faculties and the cultivation of the moral feelings, through that restricted class of ideas which there is a possibility of exciting. The activity of the mind then, is just as much the result of its consciousness of external impressions, by which its faculties are called into play, as the life of the body is dependent on the appropriation of nutrient materials, and the constant influence of external forces."—*Carpenter. Hum. Phys.* § 786.

The celebrated Wm. Lawrence, whose disregard of church doctrines, in teaching that the mind was only a function of the brain, in his academical lectures, about the year 1818 in London, brought down upon him the vain thunders of the church, said:—"There is no digestion without an alimentary cavity: no biliary secretion without some kind of liver: no thought without a brain. To talk of life as independent of the animal body,—to speak of a function without reference to an appropriate organ, is physiologically absurd. It is looking for an effect without a cause. We might as reasonably expect daylight while the sun is below the horizon. What should we think of abstracting elasticity, cohesion, gravity, and bestowing them in a separate existence from the bodies in which those properties are seen."

"We must not imagine that after death we shall commence a new period of existence, like the present, and still less, that we shall have a like, or a more noble and splendid dwelling-place. * * If we speak of the continuance of the soul after death, in time and space, we are compelled to inquire after its preëxistence. For a future personal existence implies a previous personal existence; and the latter presents even more serious difficulties than the former. If we existed before birth, why have we no recollection of it? And if no consciousness of this state remain to us, how will a consciousness of our present earthly life remain to us after death? And yet this is precisely what the most of men are concerned about. They wish to take with them their consciousness, their remembrance of this life into the other. The pious man, who has a clear understanding of his faith, can only laugh at this solicitude about the consciousness, as we should laugh at the child who should be afraid, that when grown up, it could no longer play with dolls."—*De Wette – Translated in Norton's Tracts.*

Digitized by Google

Belief in a future life "is for the higher classes, and especially for women of quality, who have nothing to do but to busy themselves with ideas of immortality. But an able man, who thinks that there is something to be done here, and who, therefore, has every day to strive, to fight, and to work, leaves the future world to itself, and is active and useful in the present. Ideas of immortality moreover are for such as have not attained the best fortune here; and I would wager that if the good Tiedge had had better luck, he would have had better thoughts." *Goethe.*

"I could be well content that after the close of this life we should be blessed with another, but I would beg not to have there for companions any who had believed in it here." *Goethe.*

Pantheism—Ch. XXVI.

Scene from Goethe's Faust.

MARGARET. Promise me, Henry.

FAUST. All that I can.

MARG. Are you religious? You are a good man, but I think you do not go to church.

F. Leave that, my child. You know I love you, and would give my life for my love. I wish to rob no one of his faith: I would hurt no one's feelings.

MARG. That is not enough. You must have religion.

F. Must I?

MARG. Alas! I cannot influence you! and you do not respect the sacraments.

F. Indeed I do.

MARG. But not with love. And you have not been at mass or confessional for ever so long. Do you believe in God?

F. My dear, who can say "I believe in God?" Ask priest or philosopher, and the answer is like mockery.

MARG. Then you do not believe in Him?

F. Mistake me not, you angel. Who dare name Him? And who can say "I believe in Him?" Who that feels, dares say "I have no God!" The all-embracer, the all-sustainer, does He not surround you, me, Himself? Is not the Heaven arched over us? Is not the earth firm beneath us? Do we not see each other eye to eye, and does not all existence rise to your head and heart, and float in infinite majesty before you? Let your heart, big as it is, be full of the great idea, and when you are perfectly happy in the thought name it what you will, Good—Heart—Love—God. I have no name for it. The feeling is all in all: the name is but noise and smoke, clouding celestial glory.

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

Digitized by Google

Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking beings, all objects of all thought
And rolls through all things."
(*Wordsworth. Tintern Abbey.*)

The *Christian Observer* (May, 1850) says Wordworth's "majestic lines in the poem on revisiting Tintern Abbey are the grandest expression of the sentiment of Pantheism with which we are acquainted."

"The natural philosopher knows only and knows beyond a doubt that there are no forces in nature except the physical, chemical and mechanical." *Buechner.*

"In rising from cause to cause men have ended by seeing nothing; and in this obscurity they placed their God: in this dark abyss their restless imaginations toil to manufacture chimeras which will oppress them, until an acquaintance with nature shall have stripped the phantoms which they have in all ages so vainly adored.

"If we wish to render an account to ourselves of the nature of our belief in the Deity, we must confess that, by the word God, men have never been able to designate more than the most hidden cause, the most unknown and distant of effects. The word is not used until natural and known causes cease to be visible; not until they lose the thread of causes or, being unable to follow it, cut through the difficulty by styling God the first cause: that is, he is the last cause of which they know anything. Thus they only give a vague title to an unknown force, before which their ignorance or idleness forces them to stop. Whenever any one says that God is the author of such a phenomenon, it is as much as to say that he does not know how that phenomenon could be produced by natural causes known to us."—*System of Nature.*

"The man who first pronounced the barbarous word "Dieu" [God,] ought to have been immediately destroyed."—*Diderot.*

"To say what God is, it would be necessary to be himself."

"If God be not everything he is nothing."—*Cousin.*

Belief in the personality of God is a "theologic cramp." *Emerson.*

"The two rocks that threaten Theology seem to be a Theosophy which resolves all into God, and Anthropomorphism, which in fact denies the infinite. This mystical tendency, denominated Pantheism, appears in the ancient religions of the East; it enters largely into the doctrines of the Sufis, a Mohammedan sect."—*Parker.*

Digitized by Google

"What is law? Nothing more nor less than the uniform mode in which divine power works."—*Hitchcock.*

He begs the whole question at issue whether the known law is the mode in which an unknown divinity acts.

"At present Natural Theology has undertaken the impossible task of 'finding out God,' who can only be found in so far as he has pleased to reveal himself. The Deity thus elicited, or as Fichte rightly says 'constructed,' is a scientific abstraction answering to the concrete figure of the Vulcan of the Greeks—that is to say a universal smith."—*J. J. G. Wilkinson.*

"A personal God is not thinkable consistantly with philosophical ideas."—*Fichte.*

"A living God is not thinkable without a material basis." *Schelling.*

"Our human personality gives a false modification to all our conceptions of the infinite."—*Parker.*

"Final causes are nothing but human figments."—*Spinoza.*

"The idea of a personal God is pure mythology."—*Schleiermacher.*

"There is no other philosophy but the philosophy of Spinoza." *Lessing.*

"Personality is of but one kind, admitting no modifications or degrees. The word must have the same meaning whether used of man, an angel or the divinity. To deny *human* personality to God, or personality like that of man, is to deny a personal God." *Norton.*

"God is conscious only in man."—*Hegel.*

"The idea of God is his existence."—*Strauss.*

"God is X—the unknown quantity."—*Karl Vogt.*

"God is a word to express, not our ideas, but our want of them." *Mill. Analysis of the Human Mind.*

Goethe has a few famous lines beginning—

"Was waer ein Gott der nur von aussen stiesse," etc.

For this passage I can find no translation to suit me, and must reduce it to prose as follows: "Alas for the creed whose God lives outside of the universe, and lets it spin round his finger. The universal spirit dwells within and not without. He includes Nature and Nature includes Him."

"The proof of the existence of a [personal] God derived from the existence of the external universe [adduced in the argument from design], as perceived through the senses, is impossible and self-contradictory."—*Fichte.*

Digitized by Google

"You are fit [says the supreme Khrishna of Brahminism to a sage] to apprehend that you are not distinct from me: that which I am, thou art, and that also is the world, with its gods, and heroes, and mankind. Men contemplate distinctions because they are stupefied with ignorance."—*Emerson on Plato.*

Emerson is a Pantheist; and Carlyle appears to be, though the shade of the latter's belief is not seizable from his works. In the Life of Sterling he relates a conversation between Sterling and another person (evidently Carlyle). Sterling declared the faith of the other to be "flat Pantheism. It is mere Pantheism, that!" "And suppose it were Pot-theism," cried the other, "if it is true?"

Bacon appears to have been a Pantheist. He says in his *De Cupidine* (on the Source of Existence), "Almost all the ancients—Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, Democritus—though disagreeing in other respects upon the prime matter, joined in this—that they held an active matter with a form, both arranging its own form, and having within itself a principle of motion. Nor can any one think otherwise without leaving experience altogether. All these, then, submitted their minds to nature." Again he says of this same Pantheism of Democritus: "But while the dicta of Aristotle and Plato are celebrated with applauses and professional ostentation in the schools, the philosophy of Democritus was in great repute among the wiser sort and those who more closely gave themselves to the depth and silence of contemplation." Again he says, "The prime matter is to be laid down, joined with the primitive form, as also with the first principles of motion, as it is found. For the abstraction of motion has also given rise to innumerable devices, concerning spirits—life and the like—as if there were not laid a sufficient ground for them through matter and form, but they depended on their own elements. But these three (matter, form, and life) are not to be separated, but only distinguished; and matter is to be treated (whatever it may be) in regard to its adornment, appendages, and form, as that all kind of influence, essence, action, and natural motion may appear to be its emanation and consequence."

Bacon was long supposed to be no enemy of Christianity, because he did not violently oppose it. But he was not disposed to be a martyr to Christian fanaticism. He laments that he cannot "dismiss all art and circumstance, and exhibit the matter naked to us, that we might be enabled to use our judgment. Thinkest thou," he says, "that when all the accesses and motions of all minds are besieged and obstructed by the obscurest idols, deeply rooted and branded in, the sincere and polished areas present themselves in the true and native rays of things; but as the delirium of phrenetics (frenzy) is subdued by art and ingenuity, not by force and contention, raised to fury; so in this universal insanity, we must use moderation."—*Quoted by Atkinson.*

Digitized by Google

"That none of the ancient philosophers conceived God, for instance, as a being distinct from the world, or a pure metaphysical monad, but all adhered to the idea of a soul of he world, was perfectly consonant to the childhood of human philosophy, and perhaps will forever remain consonant to it."—*Herder. Philosophy of History.*

I was "the enthusiastic disciple and most decided worshipper" of Spinoza.—*Goethe.—Wahrheit und Dichtung, Buch XIV.*

"In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Crishna says "I am author of the creation and the dissolution of the universe. There is nothing greater than I am, O Ardjouna, and every thing depends upon me, as the pearls upon the string which holds them, I am the vapor in water, the light in the sun and in the moon, the invocation in the Vedas, the sound in the air, the masculine energy in man, the sweet perfume in the earth, the brightness in the flame, the life in animals, the fervor of zeal, the eternal seed of all nature; I am the wisdom of the sage, the power of the powerful, the glory of him who has glory. * * In animated beings I am chaste love. I am the father of the world; I am of it the mother, the grand-parent, the director; I am the secret doctrine, the expiation, the holy monosyllable, the three books of the Vedas: I am guide, nourisher, master witness, abode, shelter, friend; I am the source of heat and the source of rain; I have in my hand ambrosia and death; I am being and nonentity. * * Put thy confidence in me alone; be humble in spirit and renounce the fruit of actions. Knowledge is superior to works and contemplation is superior to knowledge."—*Cousin Mod. Phil. Second Series, Vol. II. Sec. VI.*

The Moral Government of the Universe.

The attempts to account for the moral government of the world, the sufferings of the good and the prosperity of the wicked, have been very numerous, but the solution of the problem is beyond the reach of the human mind. The stoics and the optimists say there is no evil; all is good.

Gibbon speaks of Zoroastrianism as "a bold and injudicious attempt of Eastern philosophy to reconcile the existence of a Beneficent Creator and Governor of the Universe with the prevalence of physical and moral evil."

An ancient author thought there would be no difficulty in accounting for the moral government of the world, if we would suppose the sufferings of the righteous to be trials and those of the wicked to be punishments. Voltaire, speaking of the drowning of a boat-load of people, among whom was a great criminal, said, "God has punished that rogue, the devil has [illegible]st." Diderot, in recording the different fate of

Digitized by Google

"Providence has chastised one, but has granted some moments of respite to the other."

"Why God not kill Debbil?" *Friday in Robinson Crusoe.*

"Either God would prevent evil and cannot, or he can and would not, or he cannot and would not, or he will and can. If he would prevent evil and cannot, he is not omnipotent; if he can and would not, he is not all-good; if he cannot and would not desire to do so, he is limited in both power and goodness; and if he has the power and the desire to prevent evil, why does he not do so?" —*Epicurus.*

"To say that God is the author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity."—*Shelley.*

"It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light and life prove him also to be the author of poison, darkness and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty and peace."—*Shelley.*

"The rashness of our judging the divine conduct in our present state of imperfection, may be compared to the folly of a man who should judge of a room full of complicated machinery, by looking through a key-hole."

"We must defer something at least to the divine wisdom, so as to believe God just, when he may appear to us unjust. For if his justice were such that human apprehension might perceive it to be just, it plainly would not be divine, and would differ in nothing from human justice."—*Luther.*

"I [Jehovah] form the light and create darkness: I cause prosperity and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things."—*Is. XLV.* 7.

"Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"—*Job. II.* 10.

"Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" *Amos III.* 6.

"There is, in fact, no part of man's psychical nature which does not speak to him of the Divine, when it is rightly questioned. The very perception of *finite* existence, whether in time or space, leads to the idea of the infinite. The perception of *dependent* existence leads to the idea of the self-existent. The perception of change in the external world leads to the idea of an absolute power as its source. The perception of the order and constancy, underlying all those diversities which the surface of nature presents,

Digitized by Google

leads to the idea of the unity of that power. The recognition of intelligent will as the source of the power we ourselves exert, leads to the idea of a like will as operating in the universe. And our own capacities for reasoning, which we know not to have been obtained by our individual exertions, is a direct testimony to the intelligence of the Being who implanted it. So we are led, from the very existence of our moral feelings, to the conception of the existence of attributes, the same in kind, however exalted in degree in the Divine Being."—*Carpenter. Hum. Phys.* § 816.

Moral Responsibility.—Ch. XXVII.

"I have known one in that state, when he has tried to abstain but for one evening—though the poisonous potion had long ceased to bring back its first enchantments—though he was sure it would rather deepen his gloom than brighten it—in the violence of the struggle and in the necessity he has felt of getting rid of the present sensation at any rate, I have known him to scream out, to cry aloud, for the anguish and pain of the strife within him. Why should I hesitate to declare that the man of whom I speak is myself?"—*Charles Lamb. Confessions of a Drunkard.*

"No man is free to wish harm to himself."

"There is a state of mind (a very common one) in which a human being, perfectly aware that he is doing wrong and destroying his own happiness, cannot refrain from the impulse of present gratification."—*Sydney Smith.*

"Man's life is a line that nature commands him to describe on the surface of the earth, without his ever being able to swerve from it, even for an instant. He is born without his own consent: his organization in nowise depends upon himself: his ideas come to him involuntarily: his habits are in the power of those who cause him to contract them: he is unceasingly modified by causes, whether visible or concealed, over which he has no control, which necessarily regulate his mode of existence, give the hue to his way of thinking, and determine his manner of acting. He is good or bad, happy or miserable, wise or foolish, reasonable or unreasonable, while his will is powerless to change his nature or his mood. * * * Man is said to deliberate when the action of the will is suspended; this happens when two opposite motives act alternately upon him. To deliberate, is to hate and love in succession; it is to be alternately attracted and repelled: it is to be moved sometimes by one motive, sometimes by another. His will frequently fluctuates between two objects, of which either the presence or the ideas move him alternately: he waits till he has contemplated the objects or the ideas they have left in his brain, which solicit him to different actions; he then compares these objects or ideas: but even in the time of deliberation, during the comparison, pending these alternations of love and hatred, which succeed each other, and some-

Digitized by Google

times with the utmost rapidity, he is not a free agent for a single instant: the good and evil, which, he believes he finds successively in the objects, are necessary motives of these momentary wills—of the rapid motion of desire or fear that he experiences, as long as his uncertainty continues. From this, it will be obvious that deliberation is necessary, that uncertainty is necessary: that whatever part he takes, in consequence of this deliberation, it will always necessarily be, that which he has judged, whether well or ill, is most probable to turn to his advantage.—*System of Nature. Translated by H. D. Robinson.*

To say that the mind is free, in the sense given to that word by most theologians, is to say that it is subject to no law: but statistics prove that it is subject to laws.

"No man can say what may be the weather of to-morrow; but the quantity of rain which falls in any particular place in any five years, is precisely the same as the quantity which falls in any other five years at the same place. Thus, while it is absolutely impossible to predict of any one Frenchman, that during next year he will commit a crime, it is quite certain that one in about every six hundred and fifty of the French people will do so, because in past years the proportion has generally been about that amount, the tendencies to crime in relation to the temptations being everywhere invariable over a sufficiently wide range of time. So also, the number of persons, taken in charge by the police in London, for being drunk and disorderly in the streets, is, week by week, a nearly uniform quantity, showing that the inclination to drink to excess, is always, in the mass, about the same, regard being had to the existing temptations or stimulations to this vice. Even mistakes and oversights are of regular occurrence, for it is found in the post-offices of large cities, that the number of letters put in without addresses, is year by year the same."—*Vestiges of Creation.*

Absolute Truth Unattainable.—Ch. XXVIII.

The idealistic philosophy is very old. . It was prevalent in India in the time of Alexander: it was common in Greece, and is very common in our own age.

"All that which is past is a dream; and he that hopes or depends on time coming, dreams waking."—*Bacon.*

"For anything I know, this world may be the bedlam of the universe."—*John Adams.*

The Eleatic Philosophers said:—"Thought and its object are one."

"Man is the measure of all things."—*Protagoras.*

"I imagine a man must have a good deal of vanity who believes,

and a good deal of boldness, who affirms, that all the doctrines he holds are true, and all he rejects are false."—*B. Franklin.*

"Truth in metaphysics, like truth in matters of taste, is a truth of which all minds have the germ within themselves."—*D'Alembert.*

"And Naught
Is everything, and everything is Naught."

Sir Wm. Hamilton quotes this from the *Rejected Addresses*, and says "Their ingenious authors have embodied a jest in the very words by which Oken, in sober seriousness, propounds the first and greatest of philosophical truths."

"The highest knowledge is a consciousness of ignorance."—*Sir Wm. Hamilton.*

"Doubt is the beginning and end of our efforts to know."—*Same.*

"The highest reach of human science is the scientific recognition of human ignorance."—*Same.*

Hamilton quotes the following:

"We know nothing in its cause; for truth lies hid from us in depth and distance."—*Democritus.*

"A man is wise while in the pursuit of wisdom—a fool, when he thinks it is mastered."—*An Arabian Sage.*

"Who knows nothing, and thinks he knows something, his ignorance is two-fold."—*A Rabbi.*

"If man should commence by studying himself, he would see how impossible it is to go farther."—*Pascal.*

"Matter is incognisable absolutely, or in itself."—*Aristotle.*

"Every belief which is proved by the inconceivableness of its negation to invariably exist, is necessarily true."—*Herbert Spencer. Principles of Psychology.*

"We believe them [the first principles of reasoning] [only] because it is not possible to disbelieve them."—*Brown.*

"The only account that can be given of our belief [in our own existence, etc.] is that it forms a necessary part of our constitution." *Dugald Stewart.*

"It seems now to be pretty generally agreed among philosophers that there is no instance in which we are able to perceive a necessary connection between two successive events, or to comprehend in what manner, the one proceeds from the other as a cause." *Same.*

"I know of only three or four arguments in the way of abstract reasoning that have been urged by philosophers to prove that things which begin to exist must have a cause. One is offered by Mr. Hobbes, one by Dr. Clarke, another by Mr. Locke. Mr. Hume, in

his *Treatise on Human Nature*, has examined them all, and in my opinion has shown that they take for granted the thing to be proved —a kind of false reasoning, which men are very apt to fall into when they attempt to prove what is self-evident."—*Reid.*

It is a singular fact, as stated by Dr. Reid, that nearly all philosophers from Plato to Hume, agree in maintaining that the mind does not perceive external things themselves, but only their ideas, images or species.

"Next to the positive knowledge of things which may be known, the most important science is to know how to be ignorant."—*De Luc.*

"To know that we cannot know certain things is in itself positive knowledge, and a knowledge of the most safe and valuable nature; and to abide by that cautionary knowledge, is infinitely more conductive to our advancement in truth, than to exchange it for any quantity of conjecture or speculation."—*Granville Penn.*

"When Copernicus found that nothing was to be made of the phenomena of the Heavens, so long as everything was supposed to turn about the spectator, he tried whether the matter might not be better explained, if he made the spectator turn and left the stars at rest. We may make the same essay in metaphysics, as to what concerns our intuitive knowledge, respecting objects. If our apprehension of the objects, must be regulated by the properties, I cannot comprehend how we can possibly know anything about them *a priori*. But if the object as apprehended by us, be regulated by the constitution of our faculties of apprehension, I can readily conceive the possibility."—*Kant, quoted by Whewell.*

"Though we should soar into the heavens, though we should sink into the abyss, we never go out of ourselves: it is always our own thought that we perceive."—*Condillac.*

"The inevitable result of that reasoning, in which the intellect fancied it possessed within itself the centre of its own system is and from Zeno the Eleatic to Spinoza, and from Spinoza, to the Schellings, Okens, and their adherents of the present day, ever has been, pantheism under one or other of its modes, the least repulsive of which differs from the rest, not in its consequences, which are one and the same in all, and in all alike are practically atheistic, but only as it may express the striving of the philosopher himself to hide these consequences from his own mind."—*Coleridge.*

According to Sir James Mackintosh, Reid, the great opponent of Hume's idealism, virtually admitted that he has no solid foundation for his position. "He bawled out, 'We must believe in an outward world,' but added in a whisper, 'We can give no reason for our belief.'"

Digitized by Google

"Many have taught that human life is but a dream, and I, too, always have had such a feeling. When I consider the narrow limits which bound the active and inquisitive faculties of man, when I see how all labor is employed to satisfy certain wants which again have no end save to lengthen our poor existence, and then that all satisfaction upon certain points of investigation is but a dreaming resignation, wherein man paints the walls which imprison him with varied figures and sunny landscapes—when I consider all this, I am struck dumb, I turn back upon myself, and find a world which exists in anticipation and dark desire, more than in clear representation and living power. And then everything swims before my senses, and I smile on, dreaming farther into the world."—*Goethe in Werter.*

"The fundamental tenet of the Vedanti school, to which in a more modern age the incomparable Sancara was a firm and illustrious adherent, consisted, not in denying the existence of matter, that is of solidity, impenetrability, and extended figure (to deny which would be lunacy), but in correcting the popular notion of it, and in contending that it has no essence independent of mental perception; that existence and perceptibility are convertible terms."—*Sir Wm. Jones. Discourse XII.*

"There is no truth in the nature of things; or the mind of man, from some radical deffect, is unable to discover it.—*Plato.*

"The Greenlanders," says Cranz, "are fond of hearing tales of Europe; but they can comprehend nothing unless illustrated by some comparison. The town or country, for instance, has so many inhabitants, that several whales would hardly suffice to feed them a day; they do not eat whales, however, but bread, which grows out of the ground like grass, and the flesh of animals that have horns; and they are carried about on the backs of large strong beasts, or drawn along by them upon a wooden stage. On hearing this, they call bread grass; oxen, reindeer; and horses, great dogs; are struck with admiration, and express a wish to live in such a fine fruitful country, till they are informed that it frequently thunders, and no seals are to be procured there." *Herder.—History of Philosophy.*

How replace Christianity? Ch. XXX.

What is religion?

"The true religious philosophy of an imperfect being is not a system of creed, but as Socrates taught, an infinite search or approximation."—*Mackay, Progress of the Intellect.*

Religion is a man's idea of the nature of his existence, the existence of the external universe and of its relations to him. In a common acceptation of the word, it means man's belief in regard to the existence of a deity, man's duties toward that deity, if any, and toward his fellow man and himself.

Digitized by Google

Shelley defines religion to be "man's perception of his relation to the principle of the universe."

Coleridge defines religion to be the union of the "subjective and the objective." The subject is the *Me*, the object is the *Not-me*. God is part of the *Not-me*, and according to Coleridge's definition, subjective and objective knowledge must be placed upon the same level, before a man can possess religion.

Palfrey defines Natural Religion to be "the Science of the being and attributes of God, of the relations which man sustains to him, and of the duty of man as they are discovered or discoverable by the human understanding, exerted without supernatural aid."

"Religion is the recognition of an ideal."

Theodore Parker quotes the following definitions of "Religion."

"A likeness to God according to our ability."—*Plato*.

"Reverence for the moral law as of divine command."—*Kant*.

"The union of the Finite and the Infinite."—*Schelling*.

"Faith in a moral government of the world."—*Fichte*.

"Morality becoming conscious of the free universality of its concrete essence."—*Hegel*. This is interpreted to mean "Perfect mind becoming conscious of itself."

"Immediate self consciousness of the absolute dependence of all the finite on the infinite."—*Schleiermacher*.

"The whole duty of man, comprehending in it justice, charity, and sobriety."—*Jeremy Taylor*.

"In India Polytheism sometimes led to rigid asceticism, and lofty contemplative quietism: in Rome to great public activity and manly vigor; in Greece to gay abandonment of the natural emotions: in Persia to ascetic purity and manly devotion."—*Parker*.

"Every man worships a conception of his own mind."—*R. W. Mackay*.

"All idolatry is only comparative: the worst idolatry is only more idolatrous."—*Carlyle*.

"Religion is a state of sentiment towards God."—*F. W. Newman*.

"Religion is the culminating meridian of morals."—*Rev. James Martineau*.

"It is customary [among the Chinese] to ask to 'what sublime religion' you belong. One, perhaps, will call himself a Confucianist, another a Boodhist, a third a disciple of Lao-tze, a fourth a follower of Mohammed, of whom there are many in China, and then every one begins to pronounce a panegyric on the religion to which he does *not* belong, as politeness requires; after which they all repeat in chorus, '*Pou-toun-kiao, toun-ly*.' 'Religions are many; reason is

Digitized by Google

one; we are all brothers.' This phrase is on the lips of every Chinese, and they bandy it from one to the other with the most exquisite urbanity."—*Huc's Journey through the Chinese Empire. Cap. V.*

"Religion without morality is superstition, which deceives the unfortunate with a false hope and makes them incapable of improvement."—*Fichte.*

Western legend says that, during the revolt of Texas against Mexico, the immortal Col. David Crockett made a tour through the Southern States to collect money and enlist soldiers. He made speeches, appealing to the passions and prejudices of his hearers, and dwelt particularly upon the strong points that the Mexicans prohibited Slavery and Protestantism. In one of his harangues he capped a high-piled climax with the following outburst: "The cursed yellow-skinned Mexicans want us to abandon our glorious religion, and go to work ourselves: God everlastingly damn them!"

The Thugs, the religious sect of professional murderers in Hindostan, are very strict in observing the ceremonial rules of their faith. "No men," says Sleeman, "observe more strictly in domestic life, all that is enjoined by their priests, or demanded by their respective castes, nor do any men cultivate with more care the esteem of their neighbors, or court with more assiduity the good-will of all constituted local authorities. In short, to men who do not know them, the principal members of these associations will always appear to be the most amiable and most respectable of the lower, and sometimes of the middle and higher classes, of society. The Thugs are good fathers, husbands, and neighbors. No Thug was ever known to offer insult, either in act or speech, to the woman he was about to murder."

"The worship of a mad tyrant [among the Hakemites] is the basis of a subtle metaphysical creed, and of a severe and even ascetic morality."—*Milman.*

Carlyle asserts that the advertisements of Christianity as a second "Morrison's pill," a certain and instantaneous cure for all possible and impossible ailments, are humbug.

"Religion she [Mrs. Nesbit] looked upon in the light of a ticket, which being once purchased and snugly laid away in a pocket-book, is to be produced at the celestial gate, and thus secure admission into heaven."—*Mrs. Stowe. Dred.*

"Fashionable religion visits a man diplomatically three or four times—when he is born, when he is married, when he falls sick, and when he dies—and for the rest, never interferes with him."—*Emerson.*

"A man is a Christian if he goes to church, pays his pew-tax

bows to the parson, believes with his sect, and is as good as other people :—that is our religion."—*Parker.*

"There is no pestilence in a state like a zeal for religion, independendent of [as contradistinguished from] morality."—*Bentham.*

"If a man has once been in Mecca as a pilgrim, do not live in the same house with him ; if he has been there twice, do not live in the same street with him ; if he has been there three times, leave the country where he lives."—*Arabian Proverb.*

"So pious as to be utterly intolerable."—*H. W. Beecher.*

"I went to visit——, whom I found unchanged, except that they are become a little more methodistical. I endeavored in vain to give them more cheerful ideas of religion—to teach them that God is not a jealous, childish, merciless tyrant, that he is best served by a regular tenor of good actions, not by bad singing, ill-composed prayers, and eternal apprehensions. But the luxury of false religion is to be unhappy."—*Rev. Sydney Smith.*

Hell the Corner-stone of Morality.

"All nations have adored a master, a judge, a father. This sublime faith is necessary to mankind : it is the secret bond of society, the great foundation of justice, the curb of the wicked, and the hope of the righteous. If the heavens, despoiled of their majesty, could cease to manifest this existence, if God did not exist—it would be necessary to invent one."—*Voltaire.*

"Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion."—*Washington's Farewell Address, written by Alexander Hamilton. See Hamilton's Works.*

Bacon apparently thought that Christianity was not necessary for morality. He says : "Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation ; all of which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not : but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men."

"In contending therefore that the benevolent affections are disinterested, no more is claimed for them than must be granted to mere animal appetites and to malevolent passions. Each of these principles alike seeks its own object, for the sake simply of attaining it. Pleasure is the result of the attainment, but no separate part of the aim of the agent. The desire that another person may be gratified, seeks that outward object alone, according to the general course of human desire. Resentment is as disinterested as gratitude or pity, but not more so. Hunger or thirst may be as much as the purest benevolence, at variance with self-love.—*Sir James Mackintosh.*

Digitized by Google

"If there be no moral principle in the heart, whence, come these transports of admiration for heroic actions, this overwhelming love for great souls? What has man's enthusiasm for virtue to do with his physical gratification? Why should I rather be Cato piercing his own vitals than the conquering Cæsar? If we see an act of violence or injustice in the street or on the highway, an instantaneous feeling of anger and indignation impels us to take up the defense of outraged innocence. * * We hate the wicked because they are wicked. We not only wish our own happiness, but we wish that of others, and when their happiness costs us nothing, it increases our own. * * Every man feels pity at the sight of suffering. The most depraved are not without this feeling, which frequently places them in contradiction to themselves. The robber who despoils the traveller, covers the nakedness of the poor: the most brutal assassin will render assistance to a man who falls in a fit."—*Rousseau.*

"Kindness, honesty and truth, are of themselves, and irrespective of their rightness, sweet unto the taste of the inner man. Malice, envy, falsehood, injustice, irrespective of their wrongness, have of themselves, the bitterness of gall and wormwood."—*Chalmers.*

"Virtue is not only seen to be right—it is felt to be delicious. There is happiness in the very wish to make others happy. There is a heart's ease or a heart's enjoyment even in the first purposes of kindness, as well in its subsequent performances. There is a certain rejoicing sense of clearness in the consistency, the exactitude of justice and truth. There is a triumphant elevation of spirit in magnanimity and honor. In perfect harmony with this, there is a placid feeling of serenity and blissful contentment in gentleness and humility. There is a noble satisfaction in those victories, which, at the bidding of principle, or by the power of self-command, may have been achieved over the propensities of animal nature. There is an elate independence of soul, in the conciousness of having nothing to hide, and nothing to be ashamed of. In a word by the constitution of our nature, each virtue has its appropriate charm: and virtue on the whole is a fund of varied, as well as of perpetual enjoyment, to him who hath imbibed its spirit, and is under the guidance of its principles. He feels all to be health and harmony within and without, he seems to breathe in a atmosphere of beauteous transparency—proving how much the nature of man and the nature of virtue are in unison with each other."—*Chalmers.*

Prevalence of Freethought.

"All cultivated Chinese are—intellectually at least—strict and conscientious atheists."—*Meadows Ch XVIII.*

Digitized by Google

"Many of the middling classes [in Spain] are freethinkers or atheists."—*Dr. James Thompson. Quoted in Pearson on Infidelity Part II. ch. IV.*

"The bulk of the artizans and mechanics of London, and our great manufacturing and commercial towns have lost all regard and respect for Christianity."—*Christian Observer May*, 1853.

"Infidelity is generally most prevalent among those trades which admit of most intercourse among the workmen." *Pearson.*

"The church as it now stands no power can save."—*Arnold.*

"So far have we lost the true Christian knowledge of human nature, and relapsed into a heathenish anthropolatry, that the encouraging a spirit of self-dependence [self-reliance] is become an avowed aim in the modern theories and practice of education. * * Yet while we thus exalt and worship the very dregs [reason] of human nature, we have by a judicial forfeiture lost the faith, in its true dignity."—*J. C. Hare.*

"Two friends of the Church of England, who take any interest in her welfare, can hardly talk together in these days, but their conversation is sure to fall before long on the dangers that threaten her. * * Indeed, a month seldom goes by, but the sound as of some fresh crack in the walls of our Church seems to pass from one end of England to the other. * * Along with these lamentations, we commonly hear complaints about the growth and spread of infidelity and dissent. It is true these evils have reached a great and alarming height."—*J. C. Hare.*

"Experience demonstrates how learned men have been arch heretics, and how learned times have been inclined to Atheism." —*Bacon.*

Dr. Alexander, in his work on the *Evidences of Christianity*, says, "the Scriptures, although they contain the highest excellence of composition, both in prose and poetry, of which a good taste cannot be insensible, are neglected by literary men, or rather studiously avoided." And again, "This common dislike of the Bible, even in men of refined taste and decent lives, furnishes a strong argument for its divine origin." Let due credit be given to Dr. Alexander for the discovery of a new rule; *every doctrine rejected by men of refined tastes and decent lives is of divine origin.*

"I fear it is incontrovertible, that what is termed polite literature, the grand school in which taste acquires its laws and refined perceptions, and in which are formed much more than in any higher austere discipline, the moral sentiment, is for the greater part hostile to the religion of Christ."—*John Foster. Essay on "The Aversion of men of taste to Evangelical Religion."*

Digitized by Google

"Of all the great philosophers of this day, I think no one takes any interest in the popular forms of religion."—*Parker.*

"The class most eminent for intellectual culture is heedless of [the christian] religion throughout all Christendom."—*Parker.*

Stray Notes.

The Eleusinian Mysteries.

"Persons of both sexes and all ages were initiated. Indeed it was not a matter of indifference whether they would be or not: for the neglect of it was looked upon as a crime, insomuch that it was one part of the accusation for which Socrates was condemned to death. All persons initiated, were thought to live in a state of greater happiness and security than other men; being under the more immediate care and protection of the goddess. Nor did the benefit of it extend only to this life: even after death they enjoyed (as was believed) far greater degrees of felicity than others, and were honored with the first places in the Elysian Shades."—*Wilkinson. Ancient Egyptians. Ch. XV.*

"A comprehensive germ, which shall necessarily evolve all future developments, down to the minutest atomic movements, is a more suitable attribution to the Deity, than the idea of a necessity for irregular interferences."—*Dr. J. Pye Smith. Phil. Mag. XVI.* 1840.

"The fear of doubt is already a renunciation of faith."—*Rev. James Martineau.*

"The Scripture is the sole authority in matters of faith."—*Arnold.*

"Go to perdition if thou must,—but not with a lie in thy mouth."—*Carlyle.*

"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."—*Jesus, in Luke. XIV.* 33.

"The reproduction of mankind is a great marvel and mystery. Had God consulted me in the matter, I should have advised him to continue the generation of the species by fashioning them of clay, in the way Adam was fashioned."—*Luther. Table Talk.*

'If Jehovah had ever seen the country about Naples, he would never have selected Canaan as a dwelling-place for his 'chosen people.'"

"Upon the whole, I have always considered him [David Hume], both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human fraility will permit."—*Dr. Adc Smith.*

Digitized by Google

"One old error is worth two new truths."—*The Genius of Orthodoxy.*

Spirit of Calvinism.

"I have not forgotten that you wrote to me that David hated the enemies of God with mortal hatred, nor do I intend to contravene it, or to derogate anything from it; for should I know that the king my father, and the queen my mother, and my husband and children were rejected of God, I would hate them with mortal hatred, and desire hell for them."—*Princess Renée of France. Letter to Calvin.*

"The apocryphal history of the law-suit between the Jews and Egyptians, before Alexander, at Gaza, is well known. The Jews sued for the payment of wages due them for their labors in building the pyramids. The Egyptians presented as set-off a claim of damages for the jewelry stolen by the Israelites immediately previous to the exodus. Alexander dismissed the case, requiring each party to pay its own costs."—*Voltaire.*

"There is in them [the four Gospels] a reflection of a greatness which emanated from the person of Jesus, and which was of as divine a kind as was ever seen upon earth. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Him devout reverence, I say 'Certainly!' I bow before him as the divine manifestation of the highest morality."—*Goethe. Lewes' Biography. Book VIII. Ch. IV.*

Theodore Parker on the Bible.

"View it in what light we may, the Bible is a very surprising phenomenon. In all Christian lands, this collection of books is separated from every other, and called sacred: others are profane. Science may differ from them, but not from this. It is deemed a condescension on the part of its friends to show its agreement with reason. How much has been written by condescending theologians to show that the Bible was not inconsistent with the demonstrations of Newton! Should a man attempt to reëstablish the cosmogonies of Hesiod, or Sanchoniathon, to allegorize the poems of Anacreon and Theocritus, as divines mystify the Scripture, it would be said he wasted his oil, and truly.

"This collection of books has taken such a hold on the world as no other. The literature of Greece, which goes up like incense from that land of temples and heroic deeds, has not half the influence of this book from a nation alike despised in ancient and modern times. It is read on each Sabbath, in all the ten thousand pulpits of our land. In all the temples of Christendom is its voice lifted up, week by week. The sun never sets on its gleaming page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man, and the palace of the king. It is woven into the literature of the scholar, and colors the talk of the street. The bark of the merchant cannot sail the sea without it; no

Digitized by Google

ship-of-war goes to the conflict but the Bible is there. It enters men's closets; mingles in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. The affianced maiden prays God, in Scripture, for strength in her new duties; men are married by Scripture. The Bible attends them in their sickness, when the fever of the world is on them. The aching head finds a softer pillow when the Bible lies underneath. The mariner, escaping from shipwreck, clutches this first of his treasures, and keeps it sacred to God. It goes with the pedlar in his crowded pack; cheers him at even-tide, when he sits down dusty and fatigued; brightens the freshness of his morning face. It blesses us when we are born; gives names to half Christendom; rejoices with us; has sympathy for our mourning; tempers our griefs to finer issues. It is the better part of our sermons. It lifts man above himself; our best of uttered prayers are in its storied speech, wherewith our fathers and the patriarchs prayed. The timid man, about awaking from this dream of life, looks through the glass of Scripture, and his eye grows bright; he does not fear to stand alone, to tread the way unknown and distant, to take the death-angel by the hand, and bid farewell to wife and babes and home. Men rest on this their dearest hopes. It tells them of God and his blessed Son—of earthly duties, and of heavenly rest. Foolish men find it the source of Plato's wisdom, and the science of Newton, and the art of Raphael. Men, who believe nothing else that is spiritual, believe the Bible all through; without this, they would not confess, they say, even that there was a God.

"Now for such effects there must be an adequate cause. That nothing comes of nothing, is true all the world over. It is no light thing to hold with an electric chain, a thousand hearts, though but an hour beating and bounding with such fiery speed; what is it then to hold the Christian world and that for centuries? Are men fed with chaff and husks? The authors we reckon great, whose word is in the newspapers and the market-place, whose articulate thoughts now sway the nation's mind, will soon pass away, giving place to other great men of a season, who in their turn shall follow them to eminence, and then oblivion. Some thousand famous writers come up in this century, to be forgotten in the next. But the silver cord of the Bible is not loosed, nor its golden bowl broken as time chronicles his tens of centuries passed by. Has the human race gone mad? Time sits as a refiner of metal: the dross is piled in forgotten heaps, but the pure gold is reserved for use, passes into the ages, and is current for a thousand years hence as well as to-day. It is only real merit that can long pass for such; tinsel will rust in the storms of life: false weights are soon detected there. It is only a heart that can speak, deep and true to a heart: a mind to a mind, a soul to a soul: wisdom to the wise and religion to the pious. There must then be in the Bible mind, heart and soul, wisdom and religion: were it otherwise, how could millions find it

Digitized by Google

their law-giver, friend and prophet.' Some of the greatest of human institutions seem built on the Bible: such things will not stand on heaps of chaff, but on mountains of rock.

"What is the secret cause of this wide and deep influence? It must be found in the Bible itself, and must be adequate to the effect."—*Discourse on Religion.*

"Speedy end to superstition,—a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end. What can it profit any mortal to adopt locutions and imaginations which do not correspond to fact; which no sane mortal can deliberately adopt in his soul as true; which the most orthodox of mortals can only, and this after infinite and essentially impious effort to put out the eyes of his mind, persuade himself to believe that he believes? Away with it; in the name of God come out of it, all true men!"—*Carlyle, Life of John Sterling.*

"One of the first things which must needs strike every reader of the New Testament, even the most thoughtless and careless, is the perpetual mention that is made of Faith, the great and paramount importance attached to Faith. Faith is there spoken of as the foundation, the source, and the principle of everything that can be excellent and praiseworthy in man,—as the power by which all manner of signs and wonders are to be wrought,—as the golden key by which alone the treasures of heaven are to be unlocked,—as the unshakable, indestructible rock on which the Christian church is to be built. When our Lord came down from the mount, where the glory of the Godhead shone through its earthly tabernacle, during the fervor of his prayer, and where his spirit was refreshed by talking with Moses and Elias on the great work he was about to accomplish,—when, after this brief interval of heavenly communion, he returned to earth, and was met by that woful spectacle of its misery and helplessness, physical and moral, the child who was sore vexed by the spirit, and whom his disciples could not heal,—and when, the cure having been wrought instantaneously by his omnipotent word, he was asked by his disciples why they had been unable to effect it,—he replied 'Because of your unbelief.' And then, having thus taught them what was the cause of their weakness, he tried to revive and renew their hearts by telling them how they might gain strength, and how great strength they might gain: "Verily, I say to you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say, to this mountain, 'Remove hence to yonder place:' and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you:" thus encouraging them by declaring the infinite power that lies in the very least Faith, if it be but genuine and living. In like manner, when the wonder of the disciples is excited by the withering of the fig-tree, he calls away their thoughts from the particular outward effect, to the principle by which such effects, and far greater, may be produced: "Verily, I say to you,

Digitized by Google

if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say, to this mountain, 'Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea,' it shall be done." When we pass on from the Gospels to the Epistles, we find the power and working of Faith still more frequently urged, and still more emphatically dwelt in. The most inattentive reader can hardly fail to observe, how the justifying character of Faith, in its absolute exclusive primacy, forms the central point of St. Paul's teaching. And in the text we hear the Apostle of Love, joining his voice with that of him who is more especially the Apostle of Faith, proclaiming that 'this', and this alone, 'is the victory which overcometh the world, even our Faith.' "—*J. C. Hare. The Victory of Faith.*

"When moral rectitude is disjoined from [Christian] Faith, there is no trust in it."—*J. C. Hare.*

"Faith is trust."—*Luther.*

"There is no stability for morality, except in Faith."—*Hare.*

Just as the last pages of the *Evidences* are in the hands of the compositors, I have fallen upon a copy of Henry T. Prinsep's *Tibet, Tartary and Mongolia.* This work contains some interesting passages in regard to Boodhism, from which the author says that Christianity was derived. I make the following extract:—

"That the doctrines of Sakya-Muni spread widely over the Western world, as well as over the East, is sufficiently known and established. Pythagoras brought the doctrine of transmigration into Greece at a period, so close to that of the decease of Sakya-Muni, as to make it probable that he received it even from himself; but we have no direct evidence that the philosopher went further east than Babylon. The fact, however, that he derived his doctrines from an Indian source is very generally admitted; and it has other points of resemblance with Boodhism, besides the belief in metempsychosis or transmigration of souls. The discipline he established and the life of silence and meditation he enjoined, with the degrees of initiation introduced, which was a kind of successive ordination, correspond exactly with the precepts of the Pitakattayan, and the practices reported in the Attha-katha.

"The Pythagorean institutions also are described as very monastic in their character, resembling thus closely, in that respect also, the viharas of the Boodhists of India. The doctrines of Pythagoras were widely spread over Greece, over Italy, and Asia Minor, for centuries after his decease, and under the name of Mythraic, the faith of Boodha had also a wide extension. The general expectation of the birth of a great prophet, Redeemer, or Savior, which is alluded to even by Tacitus, as prevailing when Jesus Christ appeared, was, there can be no doubt, of Boodhistic origin, and not at all confined to Jews, or based only on the prophecies of their scripture.

Digitized by Google

Although, therefore the classic literature of that age affords no evidence of the precise character of this Boodhism, nor of the basis of scripture or tradition on which it rested, still the two facts,—*first*, the existence of these books in India at the period, and *secondly*, the wide spread in the West of the doctrines and belief, which rested upon them—may be considered as both well-established and not likely to be denied.

"Under the supposition of the preëxistence [and extensive prevalence] of Boodhism, such as these sacred books describe, and its professors still preach, the rapid spread of Christianity in the first and second centuries of our era, is not surprising. To a mind, already impressed with Boodhistic belief and Boodhistic doctrines, the birth of a Savior and Redeemer for the Western world, recognised as a new Boodh by wise man of the East, that is by Magi, Sramanas or Lamas, who had obtained the Arhat sanctification, was an event expected and therefore readily accepted when declared and announced. It was no abjuration of an old faith that the teachers of Christianity asked of the Boodhists, but a mere qualification of an existing belief, by the incorporation into it of the Mosaic account of the creation, original sin and the fall of man. * * * It would require an entire volume to compare in detail the several points of similarity [between Boodhism and Christianity], and to trace the divergence from the more ancient doctrine and practice, in the creed, and forms of ritual ultimately adopted by the church of the West. It is enough for our present purpose to establish the superior antiquity of the one, found to exhibit so many points of close correspondence.

"But independently of the similarity of doctrine, of ritual and of institutions, we know that Boodhism has run in the East a very analogous course with Romanism in the West. Having its classes of specially initiated and ordained teachers, it spread widely amongst the population, before it was adopted and made a state religion by the reigning sovereigns. It was torn to pieces by heresies and schisms on trivial observances and doctrinal points, till one sect, having enlisted the power of the state on its side, persecuted and expelled its opponent, to the weakening and ultimate ruin of the church and its authority. * * But the religion of Tibet and of China, differing widely in one respect from that of papistical Rome, is by principle tolerant. Believing that the human mind can by meditation and abstraction, arrive at the knowledge of divine truth, it concedes freedom of thought and conscience to all."

Notices of Books, for the Information of those who may wish to examine further.

This book is confessedly only a compendium—a compilation of what has been written by others. It is but reasonable to presume that some of those who read it, may wish to examine further. For

Digitized by Google

the benefit of such I add some notices of books written for and against the Bible.

Christian Books

The four principal books in favor of the Bible may be said to be Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, Butler's *Analogy of Religion*, Jenyn's *Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*, and Paley's *Natural Theology*.

Paley in his *Evidences* bases his argument almost entirely on the miracles. After having closed the hearing of all the evidence which he has seen fit to adduce in favor of his faith, he says, "with us, upon the subject of the truth of Christianity, there is but one question, namely, whether the miracles were actually wrought."

He advances two main propositions. The first is "That there is satisfactory evidence that many professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labors, dangers and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and solely in consequence of their belief of those accounts: and that they also submitted from the same motives to new rules of conduct." That the early Christians must have suffered much, he proves by the nature of the case, by the testimony of the Pagan historians of Rome, and by the accounts of the persecutions preserved in the New Testament and in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. He then endeavors to prove the truthfulness of the historical scriptures by showing that they were quoted by ancient Christian writers; that they were held in peculiar respect; that they were in early times collected into distinct volumes and distinguished by appropriate and respectful names; that they were publicly read and expounded in the early Christian assemblages; that commentaries were early written upon them; that they were received by Christians of different sects and persuasions; that the four *Evangels*, the *Acts*, the thirteen *Epistles* of Paul, the first of John, and the first of Peter, were received without doubt by those who doubted concerning the other books of our present canon; and that these propositions cannot be predicated of any other books.

His second proposition is that no other alleged miracles are supported by similar testimony. Thus, his whole argument rests upon his first proposition, which is unsound because neither the New Testament nor any other received history asserts that any Christian martyr has witnessed a miracle of the apostles.

Although Paley rests his case on the miracles, he does not neglect other testimony. He introduces the prophecy of Isaiah (*Ch. LII*), which relates to Jacob, and not to Jesus, and the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was probably, or at least, for all we know to the contrary, written after the event. He then introduces the morality of the Gospel, admitting at the same time,

Digitized by Google

that "morality, neither in the Gospel nor in any other book, can be a subject, properly speaking of discovery." He then endeavors to show that the character of Jesus is represented in the same manner by the four evangelists, and that the character is an original one. The most successful portion of Paley's essay, is that wherein he attempts, and I think successfully, to show that the matter of the four gospels was written by persons who lived in the apostolic age, and were acquainted with the state of affairs in Judea, in the time of Jesus. He does not show, however, that each of the four evangelists had separate means of knowledge. Such is about the substance of Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*. John Foster writes thus of Paley: "It has been the enviable lot of here and there a favored individual, to do some one important thing so well, that it shall never need to be done again: and we regard Dr. Paley's writings on the Evidences of Christianity as of so signally decisive a character, that we should be content to let them stand as the essence and the close of the great argument on the part of its believers; and should feel no despondency or chagrin, if we could be prophetically certified, that such an efficient Christian reasoner would never henceforth arise. We should consider the grand fortress of proof, as now raised and finished, the intellectual capital of that empire, which is destined to leave the widest boundaries attained by the Roman far behind."

Butler's *Analogy of Religion* is a work of much fame, but as it appears to me, of no great merit. Seven-eighths of the book are occupied with the consideration of analogies in nature, going to show that there are no antecedent improbabilities in the general scheme of Christianity, and one-eighth is devoted to the positive evidences in its favor—which are limited to miracles and prophecies.

As analogical to a future life, he finds that men have at different times different mental and physical powers, and different capacities for pleasure and suffering. There are also changes in capacities and states of life in lower animals, as the caterpillar changes to the chrysalis, and the chrysalis to the butterfly. Now that we have "capacities of action, of happiness and misery", "before death is a presumption that we shall retain them through and after death." "There is really no particular distinct ground or reason for apprehending that our living powers will be destroyed by death. The mind is one and indivisible, not at all dependent on the body, but merely residing in it, as is proved by the fact, that the loss of an arm or leg does not weaken the intellectual powers." And thus he goes on, building his castle in the air, as a zealous Christian might before the birth of physiology.

As to his analogies for a future state of rewards and punishments, a moral government of the universe by an anthropomorphic divinity, and the probability that this world is a state of proba-

Digitized by Google

tion, I cannot consider them worthy of a place here, but refer the curious to the work itself, hoping that they may find more information, and take more interest in it than I could. Brougham says, it is "the most argumentative and philosophical defence of Christianity ever submitted to the world." Dr. Arnold says, it is "one of the greatest works in the language." Chalmers "always reckoned" Bishop Butler to be "one of the best and wisest of writers."

Soame Jenyns, in his work on the *Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion*, lays down the following points, viz.:

"*First*. That there is now extant a book entitled, the New Testament.

"*Secondly*. That from this book may be extracted a system of religion entirely new, both with regard to the object and the doctrines, not only infinitely superior to, but unlike everything which had ever before entered into the mind of man.

"*Thirdly*. That from this book may likewise be collected a system of ethics in which every moral precept founded on reason is carried to a higher degree of purity and perfection than in any other of the wisest philosophers of preceding ages; every moral precept, founded on false principles, is totally omitted, and many new precepts added, peculiarly corresponding with the new object of this religion.

"*Lastly*. That such a system of religion and morality could not possibly have been the work of any man or set of men; much less of those obscure, ignorant and illiterate persons, who actually did discover and publish it to the world; and that, therefore, it must undoubtedly have been effected by the interposition of the Divine power, that it must derive its origin from God."

The works in favor of the Bible, which have appeared most readable to me, are the books of *Channing* and *Palfrey*, entitled *Evidences of Christianity*.

The only noteworthy defense of the genuineness of the Mosaic books is to be found in Hengstenberg on the Pentateuch. The same author, in his *Christology of the Old Testament*, endeavors to show that the Hebrew prophets foretold the coming of Jesus.

The ablest defense of the genuineness of the four gospels is that of Norton. It is, as Greg says, "a work full of learning, resolutely applied to the establishment of a foregone conclusion."

Leibnitz wrote on *The Conformity of Faith with Reason*, and *The Theodicea*, on the Origin of Evil. Chalmers says "Leibnitz is rightly held to be the most philosophical defender of Christianity in its own peculiar and evangelical form. We should not say that he is the most effective defender of it, an honor which we should rather ascribe to Jonathan Edwards." I must confess that I have not been able to find anything in the controversial works of Leibnitz save words.

The principal writings of Jonathan Edwards are his Essay on

Digitized by Google

the Will, and Sermons exalting the merits of Hell. Chalmers says "There is no European, divine to whom I make such frequent appeals in my class-room, as I do to Edwards; no book of human composition which I more strenuously recommend than his *Treatise on the Will.*"

The best argument for an anthropomorphic divinity is that in Paley's *Natural Theology*; the best attempt to justify the moral government of the universe, supposing it to be under the control of an omnipotent and anthropomorphism is that of Plutarch.

Kitto's *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature* is the best work of its kind.

T. H. Horne's *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures* is a valuable book. It is not the work of a great man, but of a sensible and very industrious student. The book replies to more objections against the Bible than any other Christian work. He treats of the necessity of a divine revelation, the genuineness of the Biblical books, their preservation, the testimony of the miracles and prophecies, the Biblical morality, the "wonderful harmony" of the Scriptures, their tendency "to promote the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind;" the superiority of Christianity to all other religions, etc.

Several books have been written by Christian authors to give a view of the arguments and evidences adduced by anti-Christian philosophers. The best of these books are those of Leland and Pearson.

Leland wrote about a hundred years ago, and Hume is the latest author whom he notices. He pretends to give the arguments of Lord Herbert, Hobbes, Tindal, Toland, Chubb, Blount, Morgan, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke and Hume, confining himself to English writers. He misrepresents the freethinkers badly, but was probably not conscious of the misrepresentation, having been blinded by his own religious zeal.

The most readable of this class is Pearson's *Infidelity, its Aspects, Causes and Agencies, being the Prize Essay of the British Organization of the Evangelical Alliance.* Pearson treats his subject under the following heads :—"Atheism, or the Denial of the Divine Existence; Pantheism, or the Denial of the Divine Personality; Naturalism, or the Denial of the Divine Providential Government; Spiritualism, or the Denial of the Bible Redemption; Indifferentism, or the Denial of Man's Responsibility; Formalism, or the Denial of the Power of Godliness." The author pretends to represent the arguments of the different classes of anti-Christian philosophers, but he misrepresents them.

Anti-Christian Books.

The ablest work on the genuineness of the Old Testament books is *The Introduction* of De Wette. It has been translated by Theo-

Digitized by Google

dore Parker. I have obtained my evidences on the genuineness of the Bible principally from this book. De Wette has also written an *Introduction to the New Testament.* It is good but it does not demolish the gospels as his other book does the *Pentateuch.* It has not been translated.

The Life of Jesus critically examined by Dr. D. F. Strauss exposes the mythical nature of the histories of Jesus. It is a very learned and able work; but its minute examination of the particular myths is tiresome.

Hume's essays on *Miracles, Providence, and a Future State, Liberty and Necessity,* and *Skeptical Doubts* are among the ablest philosophical writings in existence.

The Progress of the Intellect as exemplified in the religious development of the Greeks and Hebrews by R. W. Mackay, is a learned, instructive and well-written book: but it lacks unity, compactness and often interest. It frequently dwells to tiresomeness on details, and does not give sufficient prominence to the main features of the "religious development." Besides the religious histories of Greece and Judea are so different, distinct and comprehensive that, it appears to me, they should have been treated in separate works or have been included in a work on the religions of all nations. With all these faults however, the work is a very valuable one; as every reader will discover who seeks information upon either Greek or Jewish mythology and confines his attention to the chapters devoted to that subject which interests him.

Comte's *Positive Philosophy* is a very philosophical review and classification of all the classes of human knowledge. In the course of his book he takes occasion to treat Christianity as a worn-out system. He says that man cannot discover the final *causes* of phenomena and should confine his attention to the *laws.* In Lewes' *Biographical Dictionary* he is styled "the Bacon of the XIXth century."

Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* is an attempt to show that all religious systems are the natural and necessary productions of the human mind in different stages of development.

I do not consider any of the above works to be suited to the general reader.

Hennell's *Origin of Christianity* is a learned, able, clear, and interesting. The author argues well against the genuineness of the gospels, the trustworthiness of the miracle-reports, the applicability of the O. T. Messianic prophecies to Jesus, and the originality of the teachings of Jesus. This work has not had the fame and circulation which it deserves.

Bentham's *Not Paul but Jesus* is a thorough exposure of the imposture of Paul in claiming to be a Christian. I have condensed his argument in Ch. V.

Paine's *Age of Reason* and Volney's *Ruins* have had a larger

Digitized by Google

circulation than any other books written against the Bible. Both are interesting and intelligible to every understanding, but neither contains much information.

The XVth and XVIth chapters of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* are devoted to criticisms on the early growth and condition of Christianity. They are very interesting.

Rousseau's *Emile* contains an episode called *The Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar.* In this confession, Rousseau argues against atheism, against taking revelation on hearsay, and in favor of the character and morality of Jesus.

Bayle's Historical and Critical Dictionary was first published in 1697. Bayle is one of the greatest of modern skeptics. As Voltaire says "His bitterest enemies are forced to confess that there is not a line in his works which contains an evident blasphemy against the Christian religion; but his most zealous defenders avow that in the controversial articles, there is not a page which does not lead the reader to doubt and often to incredulity." His most celebrated articles are those on *David*, the *Manicheans*, *Pyrrhonisme*, and the *Paulicians*.

The Vestiges of Creation [by Robert Chambers?] is an able, interesting and instructive work, written to advocate Laplace's theory of the formation of the universe and the "Development Theory" of the formation of the animal kingdom. The work has been greatly abused because it had great influence. The author, says of the book, in the preface to the tenth English edition:—"It never had a single declared adherent,—and nine editions have been sold. Obloquy has been poured upon the nameless author from a score of sources,—and his leading idea, in a subdued form, finds its way into books of science, and gives a direction to research. Professing adversaries write books in imitation of his, and with the benefit of a few concessions to prejudice, contrive to obtain the favor denied to him."

The Phases of Faith by F. W. Newman is a good picture of the travels of the Christian through the dogmas of Christianity, but the book is best suited for those who have believed and studied the Mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation, Adam's Fall, Atonement, etc. The Rev. James Martineau has written an excellent review of the work.

Newman's *Hebrew Monarchy* is the only English history of the Jews worthy of notice. It exposes the unreliable character of the Biblical history, and shows up the wickedness of the chosen people. It is an able, and interesting book.

The Creed of Christendom by W. R. Greg, is a well-written book. The author attacks a great many of the Christian dogmas, and all that he says is worth the saying; but he does treat any portion of the subject thoroughly

The System of Nature attributed to Baron D'Holbach is the

Digitized by Google

best work in favor of atheism. Its style is clear and forcible Brougham says it is 'The work of a great author.'

Man's Nature and Development by H. G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau is an able work against anthropomorphism, but it is rather fragmentary in its character.'

Shelley's *Queen Mab* with its notes is decidedly hostile to anthropomorphism.

Byron wrote no work directed specially against the Bible, but he inserted many anti-Christian sentences in *Childe Harold*, the *Vision of Judgment*, and *Cain*.

Carlyle and Emerson have not expressed their religious opinions clearly in any of their works, nor has either made an open attack on the Bible.

Voltaire exercised an immense influence on the religious opinions of his century; but his anti-Christian writings have been superseded by later, more learned and more complete works. His *Philosophical Dictionary* was his chief work against the Bible.

Taylor's *Diegesis*, Higgin's *Anacalypsis*, and Dupins' *Origine de tous les Cultes* are learned works written principally to show that the doctrines of Christianity were derived from heathen nations and had, mostly, their origin in astronomical symbolism. Each of these books contains interesting passages, but all of them are inconclusive aud unsatisfactory. The authors were smothered under their learning.

The best work on Religious Symbolism is that of Creuzer, as translated and improved by Guigniaut. It has not been translated into English.

One of the best critical works on the anti-christian side is *The Doctrines of Christianity depicted in their historical development and in their struggle uith modern science* by Dr. D. F. Strauss. It has not been translated into English, but it is probable that I shall undertake the work.

Koehler-Glaube und Wissenschaft [Science and Superstition] by Prof. Karl Vogt, *Der Kreislauf des Lebens* [The Circulation of Life] by Prof. Jacobus Moleschott, and *Kraft und Stoff* [Matter and Force] by Dr. Buechner, books published within a few years in Germany, have had a great circulation there and have had much influence on the public mind. The main purpose of all is to prove that mind is a mere function of the brain. They have not been translated into English.

Digitized by Google

Errors.

Vol. I. p. 109. The two tribes which adhered to Rehoboam were not Judah and Levi but Judah and Benjamin.

Dr. Kitto, editor of the *Biblical Encyclopedia* was not a "bishop," as I have in several places styled him.

Vol. II. p. 146. The Jewish prophets were not all priests in office, but they were in feeling.

The statement of the doctrines of the Arminians on page 162, Vol. II. is taken, not from *the* Arminian "Confession of Faith," but from Mosheim's definition of their doctrines. The Arminians assert that God sends his grace, sufficient to save, upon all men, but that only those will accept that grace whom he from all eternity foresaw would do so.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

form 430

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

DEC 30 1916		
[illegible]		
JAN - 1 1917		
JAN 2 1917		
JAN - 3 1917		
JAN - 8 1917		
JAN - 9 1917		
JAN 10 1917		
SEP 27 1918		

Digitized by Google

B'D. NOV 3 1913

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google